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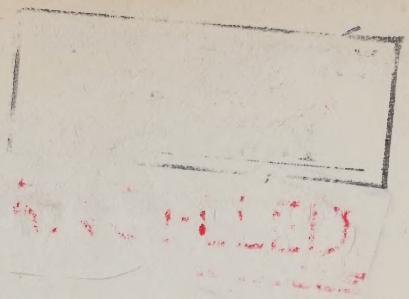

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SEEDS OF WAR.

The Matthias Corvinus monument at Cluj (Kolozsvár) in Transylvania.

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SEEDS of WAR:

A POLITICAL STUDY OF AUSTRIA, HUNGARY, CZECHO-SLOVAKIA, ROUMANIA AND JUGO-SLAVIA, 1922.

BY
ROBERT BIRKHILL.

WALLACE GANDY,
77 and 78, Red Lion Street, W.C. 1.
LONDON: ENGLAND.
1923.

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PRINTED AND MADE IN GREAT BRITAIN BY
WILLIAM POLLARD & CO. LTD., EXETER.

TO

MY MOTHER.

ILLUSTRATIONS.

From Photographs taken by the Author.

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INTRODUCTION.

MY attention was caught some time ago by complaints from the minorities in the Succession States, which suggested that the new order in Central Europe—the final enthronement of the idea of Nationality—had not brought with it that Golden Age of liberty, progress and universal toleration, with which its protagonists in this country are so fond of crediting it. I therefore decided to make a tour in Central Europe with the object of discovering if these reports were true, to what extent the new organisation of states made for peace, progress and general contentment, and how far it improved in these respects on the old system. After visiting Austria and Hungary first, I accordingly went through Slovakia, investigating both the minority and the Slovak questions. I then spent about a month in Roumania, most of it in Transylvania, where I visited nearly all the principal towns and also went into the country districts. After that, I entered Jugo-

Slavia, and visited the Bánát and Bácska, besides spending some time in Belgrade. My tour of the minorities was now really complete ; but one question still remained, which struck me as so important to the peace of Central Europe that I could not leave it unexamined. I therefore went to Zagreb and passed nearly a week there in an intensive study of the Croatian problem.

My resulting impressions I have set down in the following chapters. I have taken care as far as possible to separate the facts obtained and my own conclusions on them, and I have therefore divided the book into two parts : the first deals with the situation of the minorities and of the " junior partners " in the states visited ; in the second, I offer my own conclusions on the situation, and some purely personal views of how the mistakes committed at the Peace may be remedied. I have adopted this arrangement in order that I may avoid any accusations of undue partisanship, or of selecting and twisting my facts to suit some ulterior object ; anyone who wishes only for facts can leave Part II unread.

The position of Roumania's minorities has been treated at much greater length than

that of the others, not necessarily because it is a worse one, but because owing to my long stay I had an opportunity of going into it far more exhaustively. It will however serve to supply some of the deficiencies in my treatment of the other countries, for one of the things that struck me most about the minority question is the great similarity between the symptoms in the different states.

I cannot turn to the main business of the book without commenting on the tremendous difficulty which attends any thorough investigation of these problems. My usual procedure was to go first to some representatives of the local minorities and hear their case; after that I would go to people who were on the side of the authorities and hear the opposite version. These latter often flatly denied the truth of what I had just heard, or else justified the action complained of by some perfectly simple explanation: indeed, they were so persuasive that I would sometimes go away feeling that these Hungarians and Germans were a most ungrateful lot to complain when they were being treated with such incredible generosity, and with so marked an improvement on conditions under their own old rulers! I would go back to

the minorities equipped with these answers, and they would inform me, with a sincerity that could not be doubted, that they indeed possessed such-and-such a privilege or right by law or on paper, but that actually *they were not permitted to enjoy it.* It was in fact one of the most harassing but also most interesting of tasks—the search for truth. I think I found it in the end, but if any little inaccuracies should appear in the course of the book, I must beg the reader to remember my difficulties and to excuse them.

I am considerably indebted to a great many people for the invaluable assistance they gave me in supplying me both with information and with introductions: some of these will, I fear, be distressed by this book, but that does not prevent my making an acknowledgment of my gratitude to them for all their kindness; and lastly I must not forget the great help given me by the friend who accompanied me on the latter part of my journey. There is one most unfortunate handicap under which I labour, in that I must for the most part refrain from quoting chapter and verse for my examples and from naming the sources of my information. I therefore ask my readers to take these things

on trust, assuring them that the only consideration that prevents me from speaking out is the earnest request of my informants themselves. As anyone will realise who has been in those parts, a person could hardly fail to get into trouble of some kind, if it was found that he had been giving information to a foreigner, which contained unfavourable reflections on the administration of the country. He might be put in prison; but more probably any question at issue between him and the authorities (such as, for instance, the amount of land he might keep under the Agrarian Reforms) would at once be decided against him! It is for exactly the same reason that I, who am British, must conceal my unimportant identity, signing myself only

ROBERT BIRKHILL.

October, 1922.

PART I.

Chapter I.

SLOVAKIA.

IT was rather unfortunate that I arrived in Slovakia at a season when nearly everyone is absent from the towns. I was armed with abundant introductions, but nearly all the persons to whom they were addressed were away. My treatment of Slovakia is therefore necessarily a short one, for I had not the opportunity of probing matters to the bone that I had, for instance, in Transylvania. Nevertheless I secured interviews not only with several representatives of the minority there and with Father Hlinka, leader of the Slovak autonomy party, but also with a prominent Slovak ex-minister, philo-Czech in his sympathies, and with two Czechs, one of whom occupied a high official position, the other a responsible non-official post. I must confess at once that those who represented the case of the authorities (and therefore of the Czechs)

were singularly uncommunicative in these interviews, or perhaps I should say rather that their communications were singularly lacking in interest and new information. Given a few bare facts, I could have sat down in London, without ever visiting Czecho-Slovakia, and written an equally good pæan in defence and in praise of the existing order there. All was for the best in the best of all possible republics: an exaggerated tolerance reigned throughout the land; and even the peasants of the minority were beginning to recognise how well off they were and to settle down in contentment. The ex-minister was particularly optimistic: Slovaks and Czechs, he said, were pulling together very nicely, and the discontented element under Hlinka was small and relatively unimportant: the aims of Hlinka's party were extravagant, especially when it was taken into account that Slovaks and Czechs were the same race and spoke the same language; the allegation that the Slovaks were oppressed was utterly untrue: he himself, though a Slovak, was a wholehearted believer in the value of the closest co-operation with the Czechs, and he considered that the influx of a certain number of Czechs into Slovakia was all for the good of the country. As for the minorities, their chief grievance seemed to be the expropriation of Hun-

garian proprietors under the Agrarian Reforms: but was this not entirely justifiable, he asked; had we not ourselves an agrarian problem in England which was being settled slowly by indirect methods, whereas conditions in his country demanded a shorter course? Was it not right that the Slovak peasantry should own the land of their own country, instead of a small group of Magyar aristocrats? These were two remarks he made, which, while not immediately relevant to the subject of this book, are yet of some interest. The first referred to the enormous German minority in the Republic—nearly 25% of the total population. This minority, which is most discontented under Czech rule, constitutes one of the most serious problems which the Government has to face. The ex-minister declared to me that if only the Allies would waive their objection to seeing Germany in any way enlarged, Czecho-Slovakia would probably be willing, in due course, to cede to her a large strip of this German territory along the frontier: this does not, however, enter into the question of Slovakia. The second was the question of the Hungarian throne: I had expressed my surprise that Czecho-Slovakia should have taken up so intransigeant an attitude towards Habsburg claims in what was on the face of it a purely internal matter

for Hungary alone to decide: I asked the ex-minister whether the Republic would still maintain this attitude, even if the people of Hungary clearly showed that their wish was for a Habsburg king. In reply, he denied that the question was an internal one, but said that if such a thing as an absolutely free plebiscite could be had in Hungary, and were to show an overwhelming majority in favour of a member of the House of Habsburg, Czecho-Slovakia would in that event probably bow to the popular verdict, and raise no objections. Let us turn back, however, and see what the people of the minority had to say about the *régime* under which they lived.

The Minority Question. The minority of most importance in Slovakia is the Hungarian. There are also a number of Germans, particularly in Bratislava (Pressburg), but many of these have become completely Magyarised in the course of centuries, and the shading-off from the one nationality to the other is consequently very gradual. Lastly, there are the Jews, who are to be found in large numbers all over the territory which is still or was formerly Hungarian: the authorities in the new States are now separating the statistics for the Jewish population from those for the Magyars; but since the former have always chosen to be looked upon as true Hun-

garians, and have only the Magyar language for a mother-tongue, there seems absolutely no reason for putting them in a category by themselves. Therefore, I will not be exaggerating if I put the number of Hungarians in Slovakia at one million in round figures,* leaving the un-Magyarised Germans to join the ranks of the total German minority (in the Republic) of three-and-a-half millions, which need not concern us here.

I found these Hungarians extremely indignant at the treatment they are receiving, and they poured a host of grievances into my ears, which, since I am not delving too deeply into the position in Slovakia, I will endeavour to summarise as briefly as possible.

To begin with the Agrarian Reforms, their complaints were directed rather against the methods adopted than against the actual fact of expropriation. The compensation was grossly unfair, being based on the pre-war value of the land

* The Census of 1910 gave the following figures for the population in what is to-day Slovakia and Ruthenia :—

Slovaks	1,702,000	or	47.6%	of the	population.
Magyars	1,084,000	,,	30.3%	,,	,,
Ruthenians	436,000	,,	12.2%	,,	,,
Germans	266,000	,,	7.4%	,,	,,
Roumanians	22,000	,,	0.6%	,,	,,
Poles, Croats, Serbs & others	66,000	,,	1.9%	,,	,,
Total	3,576,000	,,	100%	,,	,,

in crowns, and even this was not paid in cash, but in interest-bearing bonds, not redeemable for a great many years—worthless paper they called them.

They pleaded however that, if the land was to be taken away from the proprietors, it should at least be divided only among the local peasants and among those others whose families had worked on it for generations. In many parts, they asserted, it was on the contrary being given to Czech colonists imported from Bohemia. They protested against the whole colonisation movement, which was not only being carried on in the country districts, but to an even greater extent in the towns. In Bratislava, for example, before the war, there was no Czech element as such among the townsfolk, though a few stray ones may have been living there. There are now between twenty and thirty thousand ! To provide accommodation for these people, measures were taken which we should consider sheer Bolshevism. A man can certainly call his house his own no longer, when he is compelled to give up the greater part of it to a number of complete strangers, who are also foreigners to him. There is, for instance, an order in force that no bachelor may occupy more than two living rooms. A Hungarian whom I met in Bratislava had therefore to give

up the whole of his house with the exception of part of one floor: fifteen Czechs were installed in the remainder: they refused with one accord to pay him any rent, and he had no way of obtaining redress. It was the same all over the town, and in all the other towns, so that even if this were the sole annoyance endured by the minorities (for it falls almost entirely on them) it is so intimate a hardship that one would feel no surprise if the sufferers continued to be savagely discontented for so long as ever it lasted.

What are the motives of this colonisation? Along the southern frontier of Slovakia runs a belt of territory inhabited by a large Hungarian majority. This belt is specially broad and marked from Bratislava to beyond Komârno (Komarom): quite apart from this area, the towns of Slovakia have in every case a considerable Hungarian element, and in most cases a very distinct Hungarian majority, particularly striking in centres like Kosice (Kassa) which are close to the frontier. The Hungarian minority in Slovakia say that the Czechs anticipate possible reference of the boundary question to the great powers in the future, and that they are making this colonisation in order to be able to present a good case for things remaining as they are. It is also part of the campaign for the entire Slavisation of Slovakia,

which they allege that the Czechs are working for by every means in their power. The Czechs are accused of making a deliberate attack on the Hungarian "culture institutions," since, if only these can be broken up, the Slavisation aimed at will be triumphantly complete. The census as wielded by them was a powerful weapon to this end. Every device was resorted to (say the minority) to lower the figures for the Hungarian population. Already, the old officials had for the most part been dismissed, and this without pension, so that large numbers left the country with their families (the rest being in many cases reduced to complete destitution); the Jews were now separated from the Magyars, and also in every area principally inhabited by the latter the colonists were drafted in to lower their proportion. Whatever the exact facts, the result of the census must have been entirely satisfactory to the Czechs, if they were indeed working for an object of this nature; for the Hungarian percentage in each area showed an amazing decrease. Many of the Hungarian schools had already been abolished, and the authorities, acting very promptly on these statistics, asserted that the Magyars still had more schools than were warranted by their numbers, and proceeded to close down a lot more. I cannot vouch for the accuracy of the estimate,

but a lawyer told me that only five per cent. of the Hungarian schools remained, and that these were not nearly sufficient for the needs. There is certainly no training school now for the Hungarian teachers—a very bad omen for the future, for it is thus difficult to see how the present teachers can ever be replaced : also, of course, there is no Hungarian University. The danger in which their schools stand, the fear that their children may not get the chance of an education in their own language, and that they themselves are therefore the last representatives of a national civilisation which is about to be crushed out—these reflections have aroused in the minority population, the deepest and most elementary of all instincts, that of self-preservation. At the beginning of August, 1922, a series of meetings was held all over the countryside, protesting against the Czech policy in this matter ; these showed a most remarkable solidarity of feeling, being attended by all parties from Christian Socialist to Communist, and even by Slovak and Ruthenian representatives.

Another result of this artificial reduction of the Magyar population is the ban on the Hungarian language in the Courts of Law, imposed wherever the minority is below a certain percentage. In the areas where this order takes

effect, suitors and counsel are allowed indeed to use interpreters, but it will easily be realised at what a disadvantage this places them, actually ; the Hungarian lawyers were quite willing to learn Slovak, but they necessarily wanted some time for this—say, two years. They were however allowed scarcely any period of grace, and therefore while they are feverishly employed to-day in learning the new language, immigrant Czech lawyers encroach on their practices and are reaping a rich harvest of briefs.

On a par with the measures directed against the minority's schools, though far less serious in its consequences, is what one person has described as " the Czech war on the bronze and marble population of Slovakia." This is only another outcropping of the great " Kultur-kampf," one not so important in its actual results as in the spirit of intolerance that it denotes. Nevertheless, one great masterpiece has already fallen a victim under circumstances peculiarly irritating to the minority population. On a square by the river-front in Bratislava used to stand the magnificent equestrian statue of Maria Theresa, by John Fadrusz. The sculptor was himself educated at Bratislava, and the citizens therefore took a special pride in the monument as the work of one of themselves. It is now completely

destroyed, and only the pedestal remains with its inscription defaced to remind the people of Bratislava that tolerance cannot be counted among the virtues of the new *régime*. The authorities of course deny that they had any hand in this piece of vandalism, and throw the blame for it on "an excited crowd," but I have taken some trouble to explore the facts, and these tell a rather different story. It had best, perhaps, be given as I heard it from one of the townsfolk:—"It was one evening," he told me, "that word came round of the destruction of the Maria Theresa monument: the chief perpetrators were Czech 'legionaries,' though with them were a number of other Czechs who have been imported since the war to 'colonise' the town. They put a rope round the head of the Empress, and with great difficulty succeeded in pulling her figure to the ground, where it was smashed up. They then turned to the rest, but it took them so long that they only finished it finally on the following day. As soon as I heard the news, I telephoned to police-headquarters: 'They're destroying the Maria Theresa monument,' I told them: 'We know that,' came the reply. 'Well, do something to stop it, can't you?' The only answer was a curt request for my name and address, so, scenting quickly what was in the wind, I

rang off." The crowd round the statue contained several plain-clothes' detectives, and one or two people who were bold enough to protest were instantly arrested: even the Italian consul, who took a photograph of the scene, was arrested, though of course the police were obliged to release him and restore his camera when they heard who he was. This version of the incident was corroborated by others, and according to one report the "legionaries" even had the use of army motor-lorries to help them with the destruction.

In Kosice, I came across the details of another and similar case. In the open space by the cathedral, there used to stand a very fine monument dedicated to Liberty, in memory of the Revolution of 1848. It represented one of Kossuth's soldiers, rifle in hand, and at his shoulder the spirit of the great Rákoczi whispering encouragement in his ear. When the Czechs first entered Kosice, they instituted a curfew order, so that none of the inhabitants might leave their houses during certain hours of the night without official permission. One night, the statue was seen intact in its usual place, when the people were retiring to their houses; and when they came out the next morning, the Kossuth soldier was headless and his rifle broken. The statue was afterwards moved to the museum, where it

stands to this day. No explanation was ever forthcoming, but since hardly any but soldiers could have been about at that time of night, and since the main streets were presumably well-patrolled, it is rather hard to believe that the act was done without official knowledge. When I went to the museum myself, I asked if I might photograph the remains of the statue, but was told that the Director of the Museum was away, and that I must not do it without his permission. I rather wondered if the same difficulties about permission would have been raised, if I had only wanted to photograph an old piece of wood-carving or a Roman coin!

There is a considerable number of statues and monuments in other towns, which have met with a like fate. Of course, I am far from charging the government at Prague with complicity in these childish and idiotic acts, but there is no doubt at all that certain of the local authorities acquiesced in, even if they did not instigate their commission. Nor is the actual destruction so relatively unimportant as it may seem; for these sudden and visible manifestations of intolerance often count for more in humble people's minds than far weightier injustices which are evolved slowly and in the dark.

Local autonomy is at present non-existent in

Slovakia; the municipal and district elections appear to have been delayed for years, because the Czechs are afraid that those who hold office under their patronage at present, and who are entirely unrepresentative of the people whose affairs they administer, would be simply swept away by the verdict of the polls. This grievance naturally is especially acute over the financial side of local government.

Last came a host of lesser complaints—acts and decrees of the authorities which show a bias against members of the minority, and interfere in countless ways with their liberty and sense of security. There is the ban on newspapers from Hungary, which is said to extend even to the importation of scientific periodicals! There are the constant cases that have occurred of arbitrary arrest, and imprisonment without trial for a longer or shorter period, on the vague and unsatisfactory charge of "High Treason." There is the excessive license allowed to all "legionaries," which is sometimes very annoying when it is enjoyed at the expense of the townspeople. The "legionaries" are those Czechs who deserted from the Austrian army during the war, and were formed by the Allies into a legion to fight against Austria. They now get everything they wish for, in the Republic, and are reputed to be extremely over-

bearing. I heard of two established examples of such behaviour. One was the case of a Czech detective, who shot and killed a woman who spoke Hungarian at a workers' dance, and was only transferred to another town by way of punishment. The other case occurred as late as this spring, in Bratislava : a man called Augenhammer, who had just returned from Russia (where he had been a prisoner-of-war for years) was walking along the street about two o'clock one morning, when a young man rushed out of a café drunk, bumped into him, and shot him. He ran away but was caught by the police and put on trial. It was found that he was a Czech legionary, working then in the Government tax office : a doctor certified that he was drunk at the time when he shot the man, the court at once dismissed his case, and he is now still employed in the same office. This leniency aroused great indignation in the town.

The grievances recited above have been dealt with all too briefly here ; but the examples I have given will be sufficient to show that the minority is by no means contented and has a good deal of ground for dissatisfaction with present treatment. Unfortunately, they have at the moment small confidence in the benevolent intentions of the government, and entertain the

firm idea that a deliberate policy of oppression is being directed against them. We will not consider at this stage how far their suspicion may be justified ; but it may be said here, without the smallest hesitation, that the government will never even begin to win their respect and confidence, and their tacit acquiescence in the existence of the new *régime*, until it shows with the greatest possible clearness that it will not countenance laws aimed against a section of its own subjects ; until it sees to it that its measures are applied equally to all men by the administration, in the just spirit in which they have been conceived by the legislator.

The Slovak Question. The Slovak question cannot be understood properly, without some sketch of its past history. In the first place, it is hardly necessary to point out that the Czechs and the Slovaks, however closely connected they may originally have been, were for centuries past up to the present day completely separate peoples with little mutual intercourse—the Czechs under Austrian administration, the Slovaks in Upper Hungary. The Czech national movement goes some way back in history ; but the Slovak agitation was never particularly acute, the ideal being confined to a small section of the " intelligentsia," which supplied the Slovak nationalist

The empty pedestal of the destroyed Maria Theresa monument at Bratislava (Pressburg) in Czecho-Slovakia.

deputies for the Hungarian Parliament. It must be stated at once that there probably would never have been a Slovak movement at all, if Hungary had not shown considerable lack of tact in her past treatment of the Slovaks. Hungary has for long been menaced by the dangers of her ethnographical position, which is that of an island, or at best a peninsula, in the Slav ocean. The intrigues of Russia raised the fearful bogey of Pan-Slavism, which stalked with sinister purpose through the Slav districts of Hungary. The Hungarian Government at once developed a sharp attack of "nerves," and exaggerated the importance of symptoms which had best have been ignored. The result was unfortunate incidents like the closing of the Slovak secondary schools, measures which put Hungary apparently in the wrong in the eyes of the outside world and gave a tremendous fillip to the headway made by agitators. The nations of Europe saw only the consequences of Hungary's alarm, without making due allowance for the cause of it. Nevertheless, apart from these stupid and grandmotherly restrictions,*

* The author of that interesting account of Bolshevism in Hungary, "Quand Israel est Roi," is right in attributing a large share of the blame for this policy to a section of the Jews in Hungary. The rise of the Jews there has been accompanied by a decrease of that very complete tolerance which had always been so conspicuous a feature of the purely Magyar mentality.

there was little that could be construed as in the nature of actual oppression, and the Slovaks as a whole were contented with things as they were: Slovak and Hungarian lived (and still live) on the friendliest of terms in Upper Hungary: the Slovaks fought loyally for Hungary throughout the war, and the real trouble only began when the monarchy was tottering to its final collapse. From another point of view, we see that the "Czecho-Slovak idea" has had the shortest of existences. When the Maffia, the Czech Union in Paris, issued its programme in 1867, it claimed independence for the "lands of St. Wenceslas," but not for Slovakia. Benes, in his book on "Le problème autrichien et la question tchèque" published in 1908, does not mention the word "Czecho-Slovak," and speaks of the two as different nations. Yet, in 1916, in his book "Détruisez l'Autriche-Hongrie!" he identifies the Slovak history with the Czech: eight years and the war seem to have changed his opinion on a question of fact. It is said that, at a Pan-Slav Congress at Petrograd in 1914, Slovakia was promised local autonomy with the Czechs in a great Pan-Slav State under the Russian Crown; and, at Moscow in 1916, Mazaryk signed an agreement promising the Slovaks autonomy. All these were preliminary skirmishes,

which had as yet small bearing on practical politics and were conducted by persons unrepresentative of the Slovaks as a whole. The idea was only seriously taken up by the Allies, after Russia collapsed in 1917; and the chance of turning a fresh weapon against the Central Powers induced them to send the Czech *emigrés* to America to win over the Slovak immigrants there.

The result was the Pittsburg Convention, passed in the presence of Mazaryk and Benes by representatives of the Czech and Slovak leagues of the United States. It is worthy of note that both in previous proposals and by the terms of this Convention, a separate Diet was always assured to the Slovak people. Even this last move, however, was not taken part in by men who could claim to speak for the Slovaks of Slovakia. Last came the resolution of the Slovak National Council at Turocz-Szént-Márton in Upper Hungary on October 30th, 1918, which passed a resolution for union with Bohemia by a majority of only two votes, even after it had been (as it is alleged) packed by Czech influence. The next day, the independent Czecho-Slovak Republic was proclaimed at Geneva, and, following on this, the National Assembly at Prague evolved a constitution which provided for a single Parliament in the capital of Bohemia, and made no mention

of the promised Slovak Diet. This National Assembly is said to have been composed entirely of Czechs, with the exception of a few carefully-selected Slovaks.

Since that time, the Slovak autonomy movement has been steadily making headway, and has gained added weight from the grievances from which the Slovaks claim they are suffering. The Czechs have certainly failed to justify their centralism by tactful dealing with this perfectly open and legitimate political movement of their "junior partners"; Father Hlinka, for instance, leader of the Slovak Autonomists, was imprisoned on account of his opinions and was driven publicly to assert that "in a thousand years of Hungarian rule, we have not suffered a tithe of the injustices of the last few years!" Dr. Tuka, a Slovak University professor, who drew up the autonomous constitution for Slovakia, was deprived of his academic post. The movement was thus officially proscribed. I therefore took the opportunity of visiting Father Hlinka in his village of Ruzomberok, as I passed on my way through Slovakia. The Czechs accuse him of working for a return to the Hungarian allegiance, and I accordingly asked him at our interview whether there was anything in the charge. He denied it (of course he would have had in any

case to deny it to a complete stranger like myself, whatever might be the truth !), and said that the limit of his demands was autonomy within the Republic. He was most forceful in his condemnation of Czech methods, and vigorously repudiated the suggestion that Czechs and Slovaks were one and the same. " Tell them in England," he said, " that the Czechs are one people, the Slovaks another ; the Czechs speak one language, the Slovaks another ; the Czechs are Hussite, the Slovaks Catholic ; the Czechs industrial, the Slovaks agricultural—in every way different ! " I took up the language question again, for I had heard such diversity of opinion as to whether Czech and Slovak were indeed different languages, or whether they are identical. Certainly they were different, he answered, and he led me to a bookcase and showed me some of the Slovak national literature. He complained that Czechs were being placed as teachers in the Slovak schools and taught the children Czech instead of Slovak (though I had already heard from someone else that the reason for this was the lack of sufficient qualified Slovaks to fill the posts). He accused the Czechs of spoiling his people—not in the sense of indulgence : they were drifting into Slovakia in large numbers, bringing with them a new and destructive atmosphere—com-

munist, atheist, materialist: they laughed at the piety of the Slovaks, and sought to inculcate in them their own outlook on life.

I had expected a rather different type of person from the man I found Father Hlinka to be. Instead of the dingy, narrow, fanatical cleric, here was a tallish man, still athletic in appearance despite his years, with a healthy complexion, shrewd honest blue eyes with a merry twinkle in them, and a strong rather humorous mouth: altogether a personality brimful of energy and born to lead. Politically, he struck me as a man perfectly sincere, and with a clear idea of what was good and what was bad, what would benefit his countrymen and what would injure them; a man straining every fibre of his being to protect the people he loved, in their mountain valleys, from the wave of ultra-democratic modernism and materialism that was sweeping upon them with cold, destructive purpose from the north-west. When Hungary's policy became unwise, he had stood up for them against Hungary; he was now doing exactly the same against the Czechs. I do not credit for a moment the sneer of the cynic that Czech tact and a fat bishopric would have kept Father Hlinka quiet: "Father" means more in his case than a mere conventional form of address. Whatever the rights of the matter, he

is sufficiently great and honest a character and his following is large enough to entitle him to have his cause heard in full not only at the Parliament of Prague, but, if need be, by the Powers of Europe.

Apart from what he hears from different sources, it is very hard for a mere passing traveller to pierce the upper crust of ordinaryness and gauge the situation in a country by the evidence of his own eyes. Startling things rarely happen in the streets to give him a first-hand key to the situation, and he is therefore left to judge almost entirely by what people tell him. One fact that did impress me, however, about this new republic was the extraordinary military activity that was everywhere in evidence; every town I passed through seemed to be bristling with troops. Some people say that these are held ready in case of external danger; others that they are an internal precaution. I was also struck by the amazing quantity of police. They do not appear to have enough to do to keep them properly employed; when I opened my camera in the street to photograph the old cathedral, a policeman was at my side in an instant, eyeing me with intense suspicion. When I had taken my photograph and moved off, he began to follow me, and it was only after some time that I shook

him off. I went after that to photograph the Maria Theresa monument (or, rather, its pedestal), and had to wait some time for an opportunity, since I had been warned by more than one person not to let a policeman see me doing it. I also suspected very strongly that a man who followed me a long way that same afternoon was a police-detective; the towns are said to be thick with them. These little signs are like the fluttering of leaves—comparatively unimportant in themselves, but guides nevertheless to the direction of the wind!

Chapter II.

TRANSYLVANIA.

THE lot of the minorities in Transylvania was a subject about which I had heard much before ever I thought of going there. Reports were, however, of the vaguest, and merely served me as signposts for my search. I arrived with introductions, not only to representatives of the minorities, but also to a prominent Roumanian of Transylvania, through whose kindness I was put in touch with several members of the National Party, which is the Transylvanian-Roumanian political organization. I also met some of the officials of the present government there, and had an opportunity of questioning them about matters of policy and administration. I will pass later to the case of the minorities, but I must pause here for a space to discuss these Roumanians of Transylvania, their attitude to recent events in their country, and their hopes for the future. A brief historical sketch is first necessary.

It is difficult to fix the date when the first Roumanians came to settle in Transylvania. The

Roumanians themselves claim that they were already there, when the conquering Magyar host swept in, at the end of the ninth century. More weight would seem, however, to attach to the view that the Magyars found only a few Slav tribes in occupation on their arrival, and that the Roumanians filtered in in the course of later centuries. Whatever the actual facts, it is fairly established that the Magyars (and, after the fifteenth century, the Magyars and Germans) had a clear majority over the Roumanians until comparatively modern times. It was only towards the end of the seventeenth century that the continuous Roumanian immigration and their high birth-rate by comparison with the other races gained for them the superiority in numbers; since when their proportion has steadily increased. Many of them had fled to this province to find a refuge from the advancing Turk; others came to do agricultural work, being invited in by the State and allowed to settle down. They were of a very much lower type than the Hungarian and German inhabitants, and it is only in very recent days that they have succeeded in producing an "intelligentsia." This educated class, which is a very small one—infinitely inferior in numbers to the Hungarian and German equivalent—is entirely of peasant stock, and mostly follows the

professions of the law, the Church, medicine and teaching. It is they who, under the old *régime*, conducted the Roumanian National Party campaign against so-called Hungarian "oppression."

To digress for a moment, the details of this "oppression" have been grossly and absurdly exaggerated; the Roumanians had their own land and their rights at law, while their schools and their churches were even heavily subsidised by the Hungarian Government; but the Magyars made the same unwise mistakes, which we have already seen them to have committed in Slovakia. Alarm at the growth of the idea of nationality, and at Roumanian intrigues across the frontier, prompted them to discourage any great increase in the number of Roumanian schools and to exclude Roumanians to some extent from the higher official posts. The Roumanians were nevertheless far better off than the Slovaks as regards schools, and it should be added, in extenuation of the Hungarian Government's measures, that these were frequently centres of anti-Magyar and pan-Roumanian propaganda. The Roumanian peasants harboured no real grudges against the Magyars. It is true that when the revolution came at the end of the war, and Transylvania broke away from Hungary, the Roumanian peasants indulged in a species of *Jacquerie* in

many parts, but these were due to greed rather than revenge. At the risk of an accusation of partiality, I cannot help observing that the Roumanian peasant in Transylvania has rather easier notions about other people's property than his German or Hungarian neighbours. When everything was in a state of uncertainty, when the barriers of law and order had collapsed, he saw a priceless chance of making additions to his belongings; he and his friends therefore rose, sacked the local chateau, and shot the proprietor's game for their dinner-tables; the fact that there were few if any cases of anybody being personally injured by the peasants—I am not speaking now of the entering Roumanian army—goes far to support my contention. Speaking of these *Jacqueries*, I cannot refrain from telling a story I heard from a lady whose house had been pillaged by local Roumanians. Everything portable had been carried away; but she knew that her possessions were still in the village, and by dint of making a great fuss she managed to induce the officials after a long time to order that they should be restored to her. One peasant came to the man in charge, and said, "I have a beast in my barn belonging to the Baroness; it has only three legs, and growls when it is touched." The "beast," on investigation, turned out to

be her grand piano, irreparably ruined! But, in the great majority of places, even these *Jacqueries* were quite unknown. I stayed at one house which had been left unoccupied for several years by the owner, and looked after only by one old man. So great were the love and respect for him of the local Roumanian peasants, that not a thing had been touched either in house or garden throughout this whole period—a pretty good record for a time of disorder. Even to-day the peasants sweep off their hats when they pass the gate, whether or not he happens to be in sight. Everywhere, indeed, the Hungarian landowners still meet with the greatest respect from the Roumanian peasantry, and the same friendliness extends to relations between peasant and peasant, for in one village I found Roumanians and Hungarians living together on excellent terms on opposite sides of the road. It can thus be seen that the "intelligentsia" had the practical monopoly of the Roumanian grievances.

At the close of the war, these held an assembly at Alba Julia (Gyulaféhérvar), declared for the independence of Transylvania and its union with the "Regat" (Old Roumania), and issued a programme of promises for the future, strongly tinged with that gloriously intoxicating idealism

which ran like fire through the hearts and heads of Frenchmen in 1789—liberty, equality of rights for all, the land for the people, and the like. These representatives of the Transylvanian Roumanians formed a provisional government for the time being, the "Consiliul Dirigent," which carried on the administration until the Roumanian Government was ready to take it over. At the beginning of the year 1919, the German minority, attracted by the generous tone of the Alba Julia declaration, and anxious to make the best of things, came forward of their own accord and threw in their lot with the new order. The intentions of the heads of the Consiliul Dirigent may have been excellent; but men of that type were few in number, and the lesser posts began to be filled by ignorant, incompetent and brutal people. The tone of the bureaucracy was lowered still further by a great invasion of officials from the Regat, who swarmed over the Carpathians like rapacious locusts and settled down on every available post that remained. I say "lowered," because, to be quite frank, the Transylvanian Roumanians struck me as being "streets above" their cousins from the Regat. The latter have inherited all the delightfully corrupt notions of government for the benefit of the bureaucrat, which their forefathers learned during the centuries

of Turkish rule ; superimposed on this foundation are the gifts with which their " French culture " has endowed them—which, being interpreted, means that they have picked up most of the vices of Paris. With these admirable qualifications for ruling over the peoples of Transylvania (who were at least accustomed to Western traditions of government), they descended to enjoy the fruits of office. The rosy illusions of Alba Julia faded before the onrush of Balkan night. The Roumanian Transylvanians were gradually pushed from all share in the government both of Roumania and even of Transylvania, their culminating overthrow being at the last elections, when the Liberal Party, which meant business and employed its customary business methods, secured by these means its triumphant elevation to power ; the National Party, which should have obtained eighty seats in the Chamber, was only allowed to win thirty-two. Its members are now furiously hostile to the Roumanian Government. They denounce it as reactionary and corrupt, and, declining to recognise it as the product of a fair election, they abstain from attendance at Parliament. They even absented themselves from the recent coronation ceremony at Alba Julia, a step which made of it the sorry farce it was, for they clearly explained that their attitude was one of

disapproval of M. Bratianu's methods and not of disloyalty to the sovereigns.

I got a very favourable impression of those members of the National Party whom I met. They are all of peasant birth, and represent all that is best in the Roumanian Transylvanian "intelligentsia." It has been said somewhere that the word "intelligentsia" has about the same relation to "intelligence" that "gent" has to "gentleman." This would be a very unfair criticism to apply to these men; but one might say of them with more justice that, while they have tasted of the heady wine of education they have not enjoyed long enough experience as a drinking class to learn the measure of their own capacity. They are full of ideas unbalanced by the lesson of hard facts. They have adopted the watchwords of the extremest form of modern non-socialist democracy, without pausing to consider whether their country is yet ready for it. Idealists to a man, they credit the masses with an intelligence and an ethical standard of citizenship which have yet to make themselves seen. Their bogey is the cunning of the reactionary rather than the ignorance of the common peasant. Even here they failed to follow their fears with the consistency of logic; for, while they were watching with scared eyes the movements of the

Hungarian, the cynical Regat materialist caught them unprepared from the rear. Honest, sincere and earnest fellows, I found them yet too prone to cover up and explain away the delinquencies of the people from Bucharest. This gave me an immense amount of trouble ; for, while admitting the existence of many of the abuses I cited, they maintained that these affected everybody with equal stress, that they were themselves heading the campaign against them, *and that there was no oppression of the minorities as such.* I had to search a good deal to find the flaws in this assertion, but I think the following sections will show that a policy of oppression does exist, though I shall not fail also to mention those abuses which affect all Transylvania alike. The two are terribly intermingled.

The Agrarian Reform. The burning and paramount grievance in Transylvania to-day is the Agrarian Reform. We are by now well acquainted with the existence in Europe of the "green" movement, which springs from the land-hunger of the peasantry. In Russia, it was one of the mainstays of the Communist *régime*, so long as the Soviet Government was willing to waive the application of the Communist principle to the land after the peasants had won it. Since then, it has spread with lightning

rapidity throughout Eastern Europe, and has taken especially firm root wherever estates were large, the peasantry landless, and the proprietors absentee. In old Roumania (the Regat), the soil was very favourable for an agitation of this nature; the land was all in the hands of a few families, who passed most of their time in Paris or on the Riviera and spent there the princely revenues which they received from home; the peasants were miserably poor, most of them getting a livelihood by working for a meagre pittance in the Boyar's fields. The decision to introduce an agrarian reform here was therefore an essential one, if the peril was to be averted of the peasantry throwing in their lot with the Communists. A landowner in the Regat put it to me very plainly and sensibly: "We're too near Russia," he said, "to grumble about a measure like this; the old days were very nice, of course, but they've not altogether disappeared, for the land here is amazingly rich, and we're left with sufficient to make us very prosperous. The whole thing was unavoidable, and we've known for some time that it was bound to come."

In Transylvania, however, conditions were very different. The great bulk of the land was already in the hands of the peasantry; the remainder was divided up in estates of a very moderate size

among a landowning class, chiefly Hungarian and German. Practically the only large holdings were in forest plantations. The landowners, moreover, lived on their estates, and took considerable interest in the local peasantry. They were no mere *rentiers*, but worked all their land themselves, employing up-to-date agricultural machinery and sufficient oxen to plough the soil deep (for it often gets baked as hard as brick, and requires as many as six oxen to cope with it satisfactorily). They therefore more than justified their existence as a class by their productive value to the community, and it can thus be seen that an excellent case might be made out for no agrarian reform at all in Transylvania.

Nevertheless, there were still a number of peasants who had little or no land; and every landowner, with whom I spoke, freely admitted that it would have been only fair if a certain amount of property had been expropriated for the benefit of these. Granted then that there was also a case for some kind of an agrarian bill being introduced, let us examine the measure actually passed; we shall then see that it not only quite exceeds the necessities of the situation, but also oversteps the bounds of justice in a manner that can only be accounted for by aims deliberately hostile to the minorities.

The project of Agrarian Reform was first officially announced at that meeting at Alba Julia, at the end of 1918; this was followed later by a declaration of the local parliament (under the Consiliul Dirigent) that every peasant was to be enabled to have five yokes* of land, if he wanted them. The definitive agrarian reform bill for Transylvania was passed in 1921 by the Avarescu Government (of all Roumania), which increased this amount to seven yokes—in a bid for popularity, as I was informed by the Roumanians. The peasants were also to get additional pasturage and forest-land for their communities. To provide the land for this scheme, all foundations of the type of churches and schools were to be entirely expropriated, while banks and similar institutions were to be expropriated of everything but their forests. Private landowners were divided into three categories for purposes of expropriation; the amount to be left to those living in the plains varied from 500 to 200 yokes; to those in the low hill-country, 100 yokes; and to those in the highlands, 50 yokes. Forests were in principle not to be taken from the landowners, but actually they might be, if the expropriation of the churches, schools, etc.,

* The peasant, even on his old holding, left much of his land uncultivated. One proprietor estimated that a whole peasant family couldn't (or wouldn't) cultivate more than three yokes. One yoke equals 1¼ acres.

did not supply sufficient for the village communities' needs ; in which case, all but 200 yokes could be taken in the hilly country and all but 100 in the plains.

This then is the substance of the bill for Transylvania (and the other parts of Hungary taken under the Treaty by Roumania). Now, there is one point that cannot be too much emphasized, namely, that *the great bulk of the Transylvanian proprietors* (*apart from the peasants*) *are by race either Hungarian or German.* This gives a strange significance to the fact that *separate agrarian bills were passed for Transylvania and for the rest of Roumania,* and that there are considerable differences between the two measures. If I tabulate side by side some figures from both, the distinction will be more apparent :—

	Transylvanian Law.	Roumanian Law.
Where much land is needed by the peasants, all can be taken from the proprietor except -	*200, 100 or 50 yokes	†250 hectares (= 500 yokes)
Where less land is needed -	300 yokes	400 hectares (= 800 yokes)
Where little is needed -	500 yokes	500 hectares (= 1,000 yokes)
Basis of price paid to proprietor in compensation	Value of the land in 1913	Average value of the land from 1917-1922

* In the plains, in the low hill-country, in the highlands.
† One hectare equals roughly two yokes.

It will thus be seen that the Roumanian proprietors can in every case keep at least double as much land as the Transylvanian ones. But there are additional clauses which place the Transylvanian proprietor at a disadvantage as compared with the Roumanian one. For instance, we see that forests can be taken in Transylvania, but this is not the case in the Regat. In the Regat, a man owning land in more than one place can have each estate treated as a separate unit for expropriation; in Transylvania, all such estates count as one. There is also a clause in the Transylvanian law, which, at the discretion of the Agrarian Central Committee, can be used to effect an even more sweeping reduction in the amount of land left to the proprietor; for it says that, in case of a great need of land, *all property may be taken except* 10 *yokes;* in other words, if a few officials choose to decide that "there is great need of land," he may be practically entirely expropriated! If, on the other hand, there is very little demand for land, the judge on the visiting Committee can decide that it is a case for "colonisation from outside" and cut the property down in any case to 100 yokes. The wretched proprietor is thus caught either way.

There is, however, a saving clause in the law—

saving, that is, for any prominent Roumanian landowner in Transylvania, or for the man who can pay a large enough bribe—for " in territories where less land is asked for, or where the people already have sufficient, the Minister of Agriculture may make an exception to all parts of this law and leave the proprietor 500 yokes." No nonsense about colonisation in such cases!

And now, what of the compensation? The remarkable difference (seen in the above table) between the rate for Transylvania and that for the Regat is due to the fall in the value of money. The rate for properties in Old Roumania is not so very far below the real price of to-day; the rate for Transylvania is perfectly ludicrous by comparison. Let us take the example of a proprietor with an estate of about 1,500 yokes (an average good-sized estate). We will suppose that he is fortunate enough to have been allowed to keep 300 yokes. The remaining 1,200 yokes would to-day be worth about 9,000,000 lei in open market (roughly, £13,000); but under the reforms he only gets 300,000 lei (about £430) for it from the State. Even this £430 is not paid to him in cash on the spot: he is given State bonds for that amount, bearing 5% interest, not transferable, and not redeemable for some fifty years. Thanks to this unparalleled generosity,

the expropriated one thus gets a matter of £20 a year to play about with, as a consolation to him for the loss of his land. I asked one of the chief agrarian officials at Cluj (Kolozsvár) the reason for this astounding piece of legislative robbery. "Ah," he answered knowingly, "you see, the lei may be back to its pre-war value in fifty years' time, and where should we be then, having to pay such a large sum for the bonds?" It struck me as extraordinary that no-one should have thought of devising a sliding-scale system, under which the value of the bonds and the sum paid in interest would rise and fall with the current value of the land in rei! Instead of that, they completely ruin a man for the course of his natural life, simply because the lei *may* be back to its 1913 value at the end of that period. It is either comic-opera finance—or something more sinister.

Some curious work has been going on in connection with land held by foreign subjects in Transylvania. Those who come into this category are nearly all of them Hungarians or Germans, who opted for Hungarian citizenship under the provisions to that effect in the Peace Treaty. Article 63 of the Treaty of Trianon says: "Persons who have exercised the above right to opt must, within the succeeding twelve months, transfer

their place of residence to the state for which they have opted. *They will be entitled to retain their immovable property in the territory of the other state, where they had their place of residence before exercising their right to opt.*" (The italics are mine.) Now, notwithstanding this clause, those who have exercised the right to opt are losing *all their land* under the reforms, except house and garden. The history of this is a remarkable one. The text of the Agrarian Bill says that " the rural soil of absentee proprietors " is to be entirely expropriated. It proceeds to define the term :—" An absentee proprietor is one who was absent from the land from the 1st December, 1918, till the day of the promulgation of this law (March 23rd, 1921), except those who were on official duty abroad." Here comes the interesting part. Every Roumanian law is accompanied by an official interpretation, which is countersigned by the King, but not submitted to Parliament. The official interpretation of this law added to the exception of " those on official duty abroad " the words " *and aliens.*" Aliens were thus not to come within the scope of the clause for the expropriation of absentee proprietors ; the importance of this point being that most of those who had opted for Hungary would naturally be " absentee."

But, on the 29th July, 1922, a decree* was issued, signed by one Petrini, the Director-General of the Board of Agriculture in Cluj (Kolozsvár), the capital of Transylvania, declaring that "an absentee is one who was absent from 1st December, 1918, till *the 23rd March, 1921, whatever his nationality or present domicile.*" The effect of this decree was directly to reverse the previous interpretation of the law on this point. It is of course in absolute contravention of the Peace Treaty, and I took the opportunity of asking an agrarian official at Cluj how he justified such a breach. He replied that Roumania could not tolerate such a curtailment of her sovereignty as was implied in this clause of the Treaty! I also asked some Transylvanian Roumanians how it was possible for this Mr. Petrini to legislate on his own account in that manner. They answered that he had done it by order of the Minister of Agriculture, and that it was Roumanian constitutional practice for individual ministers to issue fresh "interpretations" without consulting Parliament, however much these might partake of the nature of new laws. They added that the National Party disapproved of this custom and was making its abolition one of the planks in their platform. There is one more

* No. 15112 R.A.

point of interest in connection with this part of the law, which is best illustrated by an example : a Hungarian lady who had married an Englishman and thus acquired British citizenship owned 500 yokes of land in territory which passed under the Treaty to Roumania. Living in London as she does, she could not be constantly on this estate ; but, so far from being an absentee, she twice visited it for a period of several weeks in 1919 and 1921 ; she therefore protested strongly, when the Commission proposed to take all this property on the ground that she was an absentee. The Commission replied that she must be classed as an absentee, *if she had not spent every single day of the prescribed period on her estate !* I asked the agrarian official at Cluj about this, and he said that such was indeed the law. Not only was this lady's land taken, but even the vegetable garden and orchard, and an entomological garden belonging to her husband. No doubt the peasant who receives this last will be specially selected for his interest in entomology.

The Agrarian Reform is likely to cost the State a pretty penny. According to one Roumanian lawyer,* it is intended that the Reform shall pay

* From another source I learnt that the peasant is to get expropriated arable land from the State at half the Government's purchase price, but will have to pay full value for pasturage.

for itself; but if this is indeed the case, the peasant will have to pay the State a very high price indeed for the expropriated land that he will receive. This will be so, on account of the enormous and extravagant cost of the reform In one village, for example, where there were only 200 yokes to be expropriated, the expenses of the visiting commission already amounted to 30,000 lei, when two-thirds of the work still remained to be done—and this sum does not include any percentage for the costs of the Central Office.

The other side remains to be examined—how the reform is affecting the peasantry. When I was in Transylvania, the State was still holding the land, and leasing it out to the peasants—usually to the future proprietor of each particular strip (though the lists for the final division were in most cases complete). From all over the country came complaints that the land was being unfairly divided. The Roumanian peasants were said to be receiving almost all of it, while the Hungarian ones were getting none at all, or at best only of the most inferior quality. It certainly seemed clear that everywhere the Roumanians got first choice and the pick of the spoil. In one village I visited, indeed, the land had not been given to any peasants at all, but was being

leased out to the Roumanian priest, schoolmaster and bootmaker. There were also many complaints that exceptions were being made in the matter of expropriation, Roumanian proprietors often getting off scot free. One flagrant case was brought to my notice: in the time of the Turkish wars, the frontier regions were organised on military lines. There were two such frontier regiments settled on the land—the one Hungarian, the other Roumanian; this organisation has survived to the present day. By a clause in the law, the Roumanian regiment is specifically exempted from expropriation, but the Hungarian one is denied this privilege. It should be added that those holding as members of these "regiments" are all peasant proprietors.

Lastly, it would be impossible to speak of the Roumanian Agrarian Reform without commenting on the scandalous way in which the officials on these commissions are exacting bribes in return for lenient treatment: even the highest bureaucrats are not above "taking presents," so that the way of things can be well imagined:—to him who pays shall be left much land, while from him who cannot or will not pay will be taken almost all that he hath. Bribery, however, does not always ensure delivery of the goods, and, when I left Transylvania, half the landowners were still

in a state of great anxiety as to whether their *douceurs* might not have to be written off as dead losses. I remember hearing one day that a wealthy Jew had just learned to his delight that his little effort had been completely successful—at a cost of half-a-million lei !

Why should all this trouble be taken to expropriate so unfairly the Hungarian and German landowners ? Two reasons are alleged : the first is that the landowners are the natural leaders of the peasantry, potential rallying points for any resistance to oppression, and that therefore the Government wishes to ruin and so eliminate them ; the second is that the Government hopes by such measures to set the peasantry at odds with the landowners, winning the former over to its side as a precaution against any possible disturbance or any movement for a readjustment of frontiers.

All things considered, " Agrarian Reform " would appear to be a euphemism for a rather uglier word.

Churches and Schools.—A word must be said separately about the question of the churches and schools, before I pass on to the multifarious other grievances which may be summed up under the heading of Rotten Administration. From what I saw of the position of these institutions, there appears to have been little *directly*

unfair treatment, by comparison with what has been happening in Jugo-Slavia, for instance. I must however make a few exceptions to this statement, and doubtless there are more which I did not come across.

In the first place, great difficulties are placed in the way of those Hungarian youths of Transylvania, who wish to go to a University in Hungary, the idea apparently being to make them attend the University at Cluj. This University was, of course, a Hungarian one before the Revolution, but was taken over by the Roumanian State at the beginning of the new *régime*, and thus no University now exists where the Hungarians of Transylvania can study in their own language. Nevertheless, a great number of them would be perfectly ready to spend the additional time necessary for learning Roumanian, so that they might avail themselves of the advantages offered by the Cluj University. It is, however, practically impossible for poor students to do this, because a couple of institutions which used to give them help in the way of board and lodging have now been taken over by the State for the benefit of Roumanians. This would not be so unfair if these institutions had originally been created by the State; but they were on the contrary entirely private concerns, the funds

for which had been supplied by local Hungarians.

There are also many complaints that school-buildings belonging to the different Churches have been occupied and are being held by the authorities. The Roumanians say, in justification of such acts, that these buildings had been let to the Hungarian Government before the war and thus became the property of the State, the schools becoming State schools; and that the Roumanian State, as the lawful successor of the Hungarian, was therefore entitled to them. This claim is, however, without foundation; for the Churches had let these buildings under contract to the Hungarian Government, which was obliged to keep up Hungarian schools in them; in these contracts the proprietary rights of the Churches were guaranteed, and it was declared that the buildings were to be restored to the Churches, should Hungarian State education be discontinued for any reason; in most of the contracts there is also a provision that the buildings must be given back to the Churches, if ever Hungarian rule were to terminate in those parts.

There are some cases in which school-buildings which had remained in the possession of the Churches, were commandeered* for one purpose

* Club buildings have been frequently commandeered in a similar manner.

or another by the authorities and the schools turned out, an example being the seizure of the Roman Catholic School at Petrozsény by the Siguranta (secret police), which was done on the most absurd pretexts. In some such cases, a deliberate and vigorous harassing of the evicted schools appears to have been carried on by local officials; a school would perhaps have moved into new quarters, and at once an inspector would arrive to declare that the accommodation was too small for the number of pupils, or that the situation was unhealthy; it would therefore find itself turned out once again on to the pavement.

There are also cases of direct obstacles being placed in the way of Hungarians or Germans getting their education. At Brasov (Brasso), there was a movement to start night-schools in the Hungarian language for the apprentices, 68% of whom spoke only Magyar; permission was refused by the authorities, and these apprentices were compelled to attend the Roumanian schools, where they understood not one word, and simply hung about wasting their time. In the same town, a school was founded for clerks of the court which only Roumanians are allowed to enter.

The bulk of the complaints made about the

treatment of churches and schools is, however, levelled at the *indirect* persecution carried on, which is potentially every bit as injurious as any direct measures. The Church schools used to be maintained from three chief sources :—the lands of the Churches, the fees of the pupils, and the subventions of the State. Under the Agrarian Reform, the first have been almost entirely expropriated, the usual ridiculous compensation being paid. It is not only the schools that suffer by this, but also the whole organisation of the dioceses—clergymen, convents, orphanages and the like. I enquired of the Roumanians what they proposed to do, now that they had cut off the various religious bodies in Transylvania from their source of subsistence. With a generous gesture, they replied that the State must and would henceforth accept complete responsibility for the upkeep of all these institutions. It is a noble intention ; but in such matters intentions are only of value when their fulfilment appears likely to be both certain and speedy. On some points there is, perhaps, no cause for anxiety here, since every parish clergyman is supposed to be receiving 32 yokes of land and every schoolmaster 16 yokes (though I have heard complaints that this amount is not everywhere being given).

There remain then only the schools and the

diocesan institutions, and I am frankly sceptical of the State's ability to support these in a satisfactory manner. In the first place, it is difficult to see how the State can possibly provide sufficient money, however sincere it may be in its purpose. It has just embarked on a gigantic and costly project of agrarian reform, the proceeds of which, so far from swelling the national money-bags, will at best only balance the huge expenditure on land commissions, interest on bonds, and similar charges, and may even prove to be a minus quantity; added to this is the consideration that the national finances are already in a deplorable condition of chaos, as I hope to show in the last section of this chapter; and yet in spite of all this, the Government undertakes with perfect equanimity to shoulder these vast extra burdens. Nevertheless, were this the sole cause of anxiety, the minorities might yet trust to the will of the State finding a way over these obstacles, and restrain their criticism until it is peremptorily called for by a definite failure on the part of the Government to abide by its pledges. Unfortunately, though, grave lack of confidence has already existed for a long time, owing to the practical disappearance of the third source of revenue of the Church school—the State subvention. Small wonder that people are sceptical

of the likelihood of these new obligations being carried out, when the State has already failed in its previous responsibilities. The fact is that the elementary Church schools have never received any subvention at all from the Roumanian State. A Roumanian educational authority said the reason for this was that the Churches had never asked for help, and I also understood him to say that they declined to have any legal connection with the Roumanian State. Both these statements are untrue: the Churches are constantly petitioning for their lawful subventions, and both the hierarchy of the Churches and all the teachers have taken the oath of allegiance to the Roumanian State. The secondary schools have fared better, the State having given twenty million lei for the support of all the Church schools. Of this sum, however, only about four million lei went to the Hungarian schools—a sum quite insufficient for their needs—while the remainder was given to the Roumanian Church schools. In view of the lesson of such experiences, it is only natural that great alarm should be aroused by the expropriation of Church lands. How deeply the life of thousands is affected by such a measure is shown by the case of the Roman Catholic Bishop of Oradea Mare (Nagyvárad), who held 180,000 yokes of land for the Church,

out of which he supported not only the priests of the diocese, but a host of religious, charitable, and educational institutions; he has now been left with 100 yokes!

It is true that the Roumanians maintain State schools, where the children of the minorities can be taught in their own languages. There appears, however, to be some diffidence about attending these, and the minorities allege that the authorities are withholding subventions from and in other ways persecuting the Church schools, in order to force the children into the State ones, and so obtain the opportunity of influencing them. Whatever the motive, it is a stupid and an unworthy line for any government to take.

Other Grievances.—I have spoken of the two big tangible grievances of the minorities in Transylvania, but perhaps more difficult to endure are those evils which cannot be brought within the scope of "questions." After all, if a person has only his land, or his religion or his education to worry about, he can feel moderately at his ease in the multitude of everyday affairs that have no close connection with these things. But if, on the other hand, an element of insecurity, of uncertainty, of risk attends everything that he is accustomed to doing, his nerves and his spirit will soon begin to feel the strain. In Transylvania

to-day, a man never knows where he is going to be tripped up next ; it may be some big governmental law, arrayed in all the trappings of justice and benevolence ; it may be the decree of some petty bureaucrat, none the less formidable for its lowly origin ; or again it may be the act of a policeman invested with wide arbitrary powers. This condition of insecurity was most pronounced of course in the earlier days of the new *régime*.

Though I have in my possession detailed and well-authenticated reports of the most revolting acts committed at that time, I do not propose to devote this section to a lengthy and unpleasant study of atrocities. I will only describe one case which, while lacking the horror of these other incidents, impressed me by its pathos, and by the fact that I came across it personally ; the names are known to me, but for obvious reasons cannot be given here. " X " was a Hungarian gendarme in the village of " Z." He was a perfectly harmless person, and the local Roumanians bore no grudge against him. When the Roumanian troops entered Transylvania for their six weeks' stay, on the declaration of war in 1916, they took " X " prisoner, but he succeeded in escaping. His only offence was that he happened to be one of the first emblems of Hungarian rule that they came across in their invasion. Then

came the Roumanian retreat and " X " took up his duties as gendarme once again. Back came the Roumanian troops at the end of 1918, after the Revolution : they seized " X " again, flogged him terribly, and took him away with them. He has never been heard of since, and there is of course no question of his death. His wife died afterwards of a broken heart, leaving her mother to look after the two children, in a condition of the most wretched poverty. This case struck me as particularly pathetic, because I happened to meet one of the little children and the old grandmother ; but it is only one of a thousand similar stories, many of them infinitely worse. Flogging was a very ordinary everyday affair then, and still continues to a modified extent. Hungarians are usually bitterly ashamed of having been flogged by the Roumanians. I was asking one editor whether he had ever been imprisoned, and he said he had been three or four times, but denied ever having been flogged ; a friend of his informed me afterwards that he certainly *had* been flogged, but was so ashamed about it that he never would admit it to people who didn't know already. This particular editor had a severe nervous breakdown as a result of his treatment, for he had always been particularly courageous and outspoken in his paper in defence of the minorities.

It was not only provocative people like newspaper editors who had to put up with that kind of thing, but also priests, schoolmasters, tradesmen, peasants—every class of the community.* It is better now in the big towns, though such incidents still occur occasionally. I arrived in Brasov just after a very scandalous instance of this kind. A woman was suspected of stealing some articles, the property of an official of the Ministry of Finance: she was in fact innocent, but was arrested and taken to the police-station, where several police-officers (including the Divisional Chief of Police) flogged her till she fainted, because she refused to admit that she was guilty. If this sort of thing is now rare in the towns, it goes on still, in a less authorised fashion, in the villages; the village gendarme is a complete despot and does exactly what he pleases, no matter how much his conduct may interfere with the inhabitants. It is partly the fault of the system, for the gendarmes are paid badly and at very rare intervals; they often have to beg for their food from the peasants, and if the peasants will not give them any, they flog them and help themselves. They are in fact, rather than guardians of the law, the chief factors of disorder in the countryside.

* It is by now well-known how Baroness Banffy, a lady of one of the best Transylvanian families, was flogged.

A friend, who lives in the north of Transylvania, wrote a few weeks ago describing an occurrence in his village that would be amusing, if it were not so lamentably typical :—" The other day we had a nice little affair here. There are in this village a regular gendarme and a village gendarme. The regular gendarme got drunk one night this week (I never saw one of the old Hungarian gendarmes drunk !), and was disarmed and locked up by the village gendarme. The next day, the village gendarme got drunk, and began a fearful whistling at midnight ; suddenly he fired a shot down the street just for his amusement—he hit a boy, but fortunately not seriously . . . . ." So much for the troops and the police. But there is an institution that has proved itself more pernicious than either of these, for sheer arbitrary violence and infringement of the liberties of the subject. The Siguranta is an organisation modelled on the lines of the old Russian Secret Police, and existing simply for the purpose of detecting plots against the State. Its members are invested with very wide powers to arrest, to examine, to imprison without trial—or at least, if they are not actually invested with this last power, nobody interferes with their exercise of it. Since their business in life is to smell out political plots, they appear

to feel that it is up to them to produce a few, now and then. They have been quieter of late, but up to a few months ago they were perpetually arresting perfectly innocent people, charging them with grave conspiracies and submitting them to an "examination." This consisted of the usual Oriental method of attempting to extort a confession; the wretched suspect would be repeatedly flogged and sometimes subjected to torture, such as the insertion of needles under the finger-nails and the like. The people occupying a house next door to the Siguranta headquarters in the town of "X" said that up to a short time ago they used often to hear hideous screams coming from a particular room in the building. The last little activity of the Siguranta was the famous "Hungarian bomb-plot." For the benefit of those who did not read about it at the time, I ought to explain that at the end of August, 1922, there was a great outcry in Roumania at the reported discovery of a plot engineered by friends of the Regent of Hungary, to assassinate the Roumanian Sovereigns; the "conspirators" were arrested by the Siguranta, but the whole business fizzled out of the public notice after a few days, the reason being that the plot had failed in its object.

The object was, *not* to assassinate the Roumanian Sovereigns, but to give Hungary such a reputation

for political violence and lack of scruple as would effectually bar her admittance in September to membership of the League of Nations. The organisers of the plot were—perhaps needless to say—the Roumanian Siguranta, and it is believed that they were *en rapport* with the Czechs. Be that as it may, the affair was so clumsily arranged that no one believed in it, and the truth soon leaked out. The Siguranta chiefs are very fond of that most faithful servant of all tyrannies, the *agent provocateur*. This summer, some pedlars went round to various people's houses, offering for sale delightful little lockets, symbolically irredentist in design and supposed to contain Hungarian soil. Anyone who bought one of these was paid a visit later by a member of the Siguranta. Most people were too wary, and I believe that a newspaper got hold of the details, so that the business had to be quashed.

In the early days of Roumanian rule, a great deal of hardship was inflicted on the old officials. Since the Peace Treaty was not yet signed and the final disposition of at any rate a part of the territory occupied by the Roumanians was still in some question, many of these old officials when called upon to take an oath of allegiance to the King of Roumania refused, on the ground that the demand was premature. Thereupon,

they were not only turned out of their positions, but also evicted from their houses with a great deal of cruelty. Most of them were packed into railway trucks with their families and belongings and sent off to Budapest, in spite of the fact that they had no homes to go to and were completely destitute. The majority have never yet found lodging in the overcrowded capital, and having turned these railway trucks into living quarters they remain on the sidings to this day.

The circumstances under which rooms were found in the Transylvanian towns for officers and officials from the Regat, and their families, were calculated to irritate the inhabitants very much indeed. Hungarian and German houses were almost exclusively chosen for this billeting ; and in Cluj for example, there is hardly a single Hungarian house (apart from the very smallest) in which rooms have not been requisitioned for Roumanians ; they pay for these only about an eighth to a tenth of the normal rent, and nothing at all for the electricity they use. Frequently, these unwelcome tenants are dirty in their habits or get drunk, and then they become an intolerable nuisance to the other residents.

The same kind of campaign against statues and monuments has been going on here as in Slovakia. At Osorhei (Marosvásárhely), in 1919,

Kossuth's statue was pulled down by Roumanian troops, acting under the orders of their officers, and the legs and arms broken. Rákoczi's bust was also shot to pieces by the soldiers; and the stained-glass windows in the "palais de culture" were wantonly damaged in various ways. I do not see how it is possible for the favourite excuse to be made that these acts were committed by a crowd of excited civilians, since over 90% of the population are purely Hungarian. In Arad, the fine monument to the thirteen generals who were executed after Kossuth's rebellion, was badly damaged and removed. In Oradea Mare, a war-memorial, subscribed for entirely out of the savings of the poor, was taken down and thrown into the river. The statue of a Hungarian poet, which had stood in front of the theatre, was taken down and replaced by a most unflattering atrocity of the Queen of Roumania. I must pause here to tell an amusing story of the unveiling. It was about the time when the old officials were being turned out of the country, and the word "repatriation" was constantly on the lips of the new bureaucrats. On the day of the unveiling, these last, together with troops and high military officers (nearly all from the Regat) were assembled to watch the ceremony. The Queen herself pulled the cord

and the falling sheets disclosed the statue with a large notice on it in Roumanian: "All right, it will soon be the turn of you people to be repatriated." There was the utmost consternation and anger amongst those present, and the Siguranta laboured for weeks in their search for the culprit, though without success! The chief statue in Cluj is the magnificent one of King Matthias Corvinus of Hungary (son of the great John Hunyadi), with the group of other figures below it, which stands in the cathedral square. A demonstration was held round this one day: the name inscribed on the pedestal was defaced, the arms of Hungary were torn off, and some of the lesser figures were slightly damaged in various ways—nothing much in the way of serious destruction, for the people present had not the implements for this. Probably they would have returned another day, and carried out a more business-like demolition, had it not been discovered that the monarch was really a Transylvanian Roumanian! He has had to change his name on the pedestal to "Matei Corvinul," but otherwise he remains in much of his former glory, serenely looking down upon a small statue of the legendary wolf suckling Romulus and Remus, which the Roumanians have put up just in front in token of their mis-

takenly claimed origin ! At the top of the façade of Cluj University, there used to be a statue of the Emperor Francis Joseph, gowned in classical drapery and surrounded by symbolic figures in the same non-committal costume. Before the visit to Cluj of the King of Roumania, the authorities paid a man a thousand crowns to lower himself from the roof and saw off the old Emperor's head. I spoke with a man who was present at the execution. When the King arrived, he told me, a deputation of townspeople went to him and begged for the restitution of the head—he expressed to them great concern at what had been done, and promised that it should be replaced : nothing more, however, was heard of it. These are only a few instances taken from a great many such acts.

In Transylvania, as in Slovakia, the town populations are predominantly Hungarian and German. The following are the statistics for the populations of the larger towns which have been handed over to Roumania. They were compiled before the war, and therefore a deduction must be made from the number of Hungarians, to allow for the decrease caused by the expulsion of the old officials and their families. An increase must also be made in the number of Roumanians, to allow for the immigrant officials from the Regat :—

Name of Town.	*Hungarian.*	*German.*	*Roumanian.*	*Serbian.*	*Jewish.*
Oradea Mare (Nagyvárad)	58,421	1,146	3,604	—	15,155
Satu Mare (Szatmár)	33,094	629	986	—	7,194
Arad	46,085	4,265	10,277	1,816	6,295
Timisoara (Temesvár)	28,552	31,644	7,566	3,482	6,728
Cluj (Kolozsvár)	50,704	1,676	7,562	—	7,046
Brasov (Brassó)	17,831	10,841	11,786	—	1,417
Osorhei (Marosvásárhely)	22,790	606	1,717	—	2,755
Sibiu (Nagyszeben)	7,252	16,382	8,624	—	1,307

Municipal autonomy has therefore become a meaningless farce ; the municipal officials are imposed on the towns from above, and the citizens are compelled to accept them, however much they may object to the selection. Needless to say, those appointed are in almost every instance Roumanians.

The complaints of the Hungarian minority, that their representation in Parliament is absurdly inadequate, is perfectly just and well-founded. It was, as a matter of fact, a Transylvanian Roumanian who gave me the figures for the deputies from Transylvania. He himself was chiefly occupied with the objection of the National Party that, instead of the eighty seats they ought to have, they actually only got thirty-two (excluding senators). Considering that, according

Saxon peasant castle near Brasov in Transylvania.

to the 1910 statistics,* the Roumanians formed 53.2% of the population of Transylvania, and the Magyars (with Jews) about 32.5%, the latter appear to have been infinitely the greater sufferers, since *they only have three or four representatives in Parliament,* including senators.

The Saxons fared much better; they have lately incurred the great displeasure of the Transylvanian Roumanians, because they have come to terms with the Liberal Government, in order to obtain lenient treatment under the Agrarian Reform. They have therefore been allowed eight deputies (excluding Senators), in spite of the fact that they are only 10.6% of the population. It should be added that the elections were held under proportional representation. I have already commented, in a previous section of this chapter, on the methods adopted to secure

* The 1910 Census gave the following figures for the territories taken from Hungary by Roumania under the Treaty :—

Roumanians	.. 2,800,000	or	53.2%	of the population
Magyars	.. 1,705 000	,,	32.5%	,, ,,
Germans	.. 560,000	,,	10.6%	,, ,,
Serbs	.. 55,000	,,	1.0%	,, ,,
Slovaks, Ruthenians, Croats, Bulgars & others	145,000	,,	2.7%	,, ,,
Total	.. 5,265,000	,,	100.0%	,, ,,

A deduction must be made from these figures for the expelled Magyars, and a corresponding increase for the Roumanians brought in from the Regat.

the victory of the Liberal Party. The nomination of candidates who were displeasing to that organisation was barred by the authorities on the flimsiest of pretexts; or else they were detained "by mistake" on nomination day; or, failing that, the ballot-boxes were tampered with in the night.

In the law courts, use of the Hungarian language is forbidden.

Economic restrictions on the minorities include among other things a provision that 51% of the capital in any bank and big commercial or industrial enterprise must be in Roumanian hands.*

There are the usual herd of minor nuisances. No Hungarian newspapers are allowed into the country, except two which come not from Hungary but from Vienna. These are *Jövö* and *Bécsi Magyar Ujsag*, published by the exiled Hungarian extremists in Austria. They are of the familiar "love - enemy - countries - better - than - your-own" quality—hence the ready permission to circulate them in Roumania; both papers, I

* *Note.*—In most of the places where I make use of the word "Roumanian" in discussing the internal situation of the country, I am not using it as descriptive of national status, but of "blood." All the Hungarians and Germans living in Transylvania are now Roumanian subjects. A certain number who opted for Hungary may still own houses there, but they are obliged by the Treaty to have their permanent residence in Hungary.

found, enjoy the exclusive *entrée* in all the Little Entente States. Roumania rejoices in the possession of many national feast days. An order is in force that every citizen must show a Roumanian flag from his house on these occasions, failure to do so being punished. Permission must always be obtained from the authorities to hold a public dance or concert. I have been to both. The concert was given to raise funds for a Hungarian sports club, and, although there were hardly any Roumanians among the audience, one "turn" had to be given in Roumanian, without which permission would have been withheld; at the dance one of the items had similarly to be the Roumanian national dance, the effect being rather ludicrous, since nobody knew the step!

These petty decrees and orders, emanating not only from Ministers of State but also from the very lowest in the bureaucratic hierarchy, are the bane of life in Roumania to-day; and the spirit of them is as unintelligent as it is interfering. When I arrived in Transylvania and went to report to the authorities, I was given a form to fill up requiring information which could only have interested my biographer or my *fiancée*. After I myself and everything concerning me had been discussed, we ran through the list of all my

closer relatives, their addresses, their ages, their birthplaces and their habits; even at that, I was spared the question which was put to a friend arriving a few days before me—"*Have you ever been in prison?*" Everywhere one hears complaints of the blatant incapacity of the officials. "If only we could clear out these illiterates," people say, "things might be a little better."

Transylvania has taken an immense step backwards; everything is falling off from its old standard, mineral output has decreased enormously, the towns are dirty; in villages previously accustomed to a daily post it comes as rarely as twice a week now. The railway services are chaotic, and everything needs repairing. When the Roumanians left Budapest at the end of their occupation, they stole hundreds of railway wagons and locomotives (*not* given them under the Treaty); these now lie rotting and unused in the sidings. No attention is now paid by the State to keeping up the breed of horses and cattle*; this will deteriorate rapidly in the years to come, if the present apathy continues. When the Roumanians left Hungary, they drove before them large herds of stolen cattle and horses—many of them most valuable beasts. These were

* In the old days, State farms were maintained for this particular purpose, principally for the benefit of the peasantry.

so ill-cared for on the road that few of them ever got out of Hungary alive.

And the cause of all this incredible inefficiency? I have already spoken of the ignorance of the officials, and of the fact that their pay is often months in arrears and insufficient when it does reach them. The head prefect of police at Brasov only receives 1,900 lei a month (about £2 14s. 0d.). Can he be blamed for supplementing this pittance by receiving bribes, as I am told that he does? A network of corruption covers the whole land, and people complain that they can get nothing done without paying first a swarm of hungry jacks-in-office; small wonder then that the life of the community is not exactly running on oiled wheels.

It will be said that these burdens have to be borne by all alike in Transylvania, and not only by the minorities. True, up to a point; but the minorities will always be chosen for preference as victims, if somebody has to be fleeced or bullied: the weight therefore lies heaviest on them.

Such is life in Transylvania to-day; and those who live there and read this acccount will probably charge me with understating the evils and the discomforts.

Chapter III.

JUGO-SLAVIA: THE BANAT AND BACSKA.

IF I were ever placed in the embarrassing position of having to devise a punishment for President Wilson, for the hecatomb of victims already sacrificed to "Self-determination," I think I should proceed on Gilbertian lines and make it fit the crime, by setting him the task of evolving an absolutely just settlement for the Bánát and Bácska on the basis of that principle. His mental anguish might, on the other hand, be balanced by his joy at the discovery there of all the materials for a perfect miniature model of the League of Nations. It would be hard indeed to find anywhere in the world a greater mixture of peoples than in these two provinces. It is not only that Hungarians, Serbs, Germans, Roumanians, Jews, Slovaks, Bulgars—*and* others!—are all included within the bounds of the same area, but they are also so inextricably shuffled together that no amount of subdivision could produce order from this litter of national frag-

ments. I must really relegate the statistics to a footnote,* but it is sufficient to observe here that no one people can claim anything approaching a majority over the rest. Motoring through the country, one passes in rapid succession from a German village to a Roumanian one, and thence to a Serb colony, until one's head whirls with confusion. The result of all this is that economic and cultural considerations are of infinitely more importance than national ones, and that system would, therefore, be the most distasteful to the

* The 1910 census gave the following statistics for the population of that part of Hungary (excluding Croatia) which has now passed under Serbian rule, *i.e.*, the Western Bánát, the Bácska, and the little piece known as Southern Baránya :—

Magyars ..	459,140	or	30.2%	of the	population.
Serbs ..	378,274	,,	24.9%	,,	,,
Germans ..	307,344	,,	20.2%	,,	,,
Croats ..	91,706	,,	6.3%	,,	,,
Roumanians	80,232	,,	5.2%	,,	,,
Slovaks ..	46,360	,,	3.0%	,,	,,
Ruthenians	10,774	,,	0.7%	,,	,,
Others ..	145,183	,,	9.5%	,,	,,
Total ..	1,519,013	or	100%	,,	,,

A deduction must be made from the figures for Magyars and Germans to allow for those officials, and their families, who have been expelled, and for those who have opted for Hungarian nationality; while a similar increase must be allowed for in the number of Slavs to take into account the imported officials and colonists. Also, it must be remembered that any accurate census taken now would show an increase all round, due to the surplus of births over deaths and the check given to emigration to America by the war.

population, which involved any form of cultural intolerance on the one hand, or of interference with the free circulation of trade on the other. Before the Peace, this area belonged to Hungary ; but, at the end of the war, disintegration made itself evident here as elsewhere, when the central authority had collapsed. A brief " local council " period followed, and then the Serbian troops entered, and Belgrade took charge. There was a short but sharp rising of the peasantry, many chateaux being pillaged and burnt, but it was believed to have been instigated directly by the Serbian authorities, for it broke out everywhere on the same day and practically the sole participators were Serbian peasants. Moreover, even these had never been discontented with the old *régime,* so it appears most probable that they were simply acting under orders. Thus the Bácska passed under Serbian rule, and so did the western half of the Bánát, while the eastern one was given to Roumania. The quarrel between Roumania and Serbia over the question of the Bánát has been constant and very bitter ever since. Both parties (and Hungary too !) maintain that any division of the Bánát is madness, but neither will restore sanity by ceding its portion to the other. The judgment of Solomon is thus in force at the present day. I got some idea of

the fatuity of such a settlement, when I was travelling from Roumania to Jugo-Slavia. I wished to spend some time in the Serbian Bánát, and I therefore got out of the Simplon Express at Timisoara (Temesvár), and entered a local train, which we hoped would take us over the frontier that day. Nothing of the kind, however; no trains were allowed to cross the Serbo-Roumanian frontier at that point, so that we were actually twenty-four hours journeying from the capital of the Bánát to Vrsac on the Serbian side; a total distance of almost fifty-five kilometres! We had to go by train to the last station in Roumania, get out there, and spend the night in the village; then drive the next morning to the frontier village in a peasant's cart; then on to the actual frontier further than which that cart was not allowed to go; next, we ourselves were obliged to cross the frontier on foot, while Roumanian sentries carried our boxes from the cart to the frontier-line, and Serbian ones received them and carried them to a Serbian peasant's cart on the other side; we had then to drive in this—out of our way—to report at the Serbian frontier village; and thence finally by road the twelve kilometres to Vrsac. The stupid part was that there was apparently nothing wrong with the railway-track—except the grass that had

grown on it during the last few years. We were told that the telephone wires had similarly been cut, and we pondered much on the abysmal folly of severing thus one of the main arteries of the Bánát. We spoke to several Germans both in Timisoara itself and also near the frontier. "Es ist eine ganz schlechte grenze" * was the burden of all their comments, and they dilated on the stupidity of hacking up an organic entity. "What do you want, then?" I asked one of them, a member of the lower middle-class. "The best thing," he answered, "would be for England or France to accept a mandate for the whole Bánát; but, failing that, let it be given back to Hungary"; and he proceeded to discuss the cultural inferiority of Roumanian and Serb. The others also wanted the country to go back to Hungary: "but, whatever is done with it," they kept on repeating, "remember that it ought to be one and undivided." They also appeared to take deeply to heart the lack of culture shown by their new rulers. I found indeed in this part of Europe a kind of all-round cultural condescension which was quite astonishing. The Magyars and Germans consider the Serbs and Roumanians uncultured; a Serbian cabby pointed out to me a couple of Albanians, and commented sneeringly to us on

* "It's a perfectly rotten frontier."

their cultural deficiencies. One cannot help feeling sorry for those poor creatures who have nobody to look down upon, yet perhaps they find their compensation in a care-free Philistinism!

To return to the indivisibility of the Bánát, one of the chief objections is that the Serbian portion is cut off from the capital, Timisoara; while Timisoara in its turn loses thus a large number of its former customers. This town was the natural centre of the great agricultural industry of the Bánát, and used to supply the country-people with the manufactured necessities of the land, in particular with agricultural machinery. Nowadays, owing to the lack of railway communication and the heavy frontier duties, the inhabitants of the Serbian portion have to get such things all the way from Zagreb and at very much higher prices. Those, who are so unlucky as to have the frontier passing through their land, are compelled to arrange for their produce to go to two separate markets, since it is forbidden to transfer it from one side to the other. Again, mutual reprisals between Roumania and Serbia have created a host of difficulties for Jugo-Slav subjects who have money, securities, etc., deposited in Timisoara, and it is now virtually impossible for them to get at such things.

These are the various consequences that must

arise when treaty-mongers avoid consideration of the vulgar problems of bread-and-cheese.

One might well have thought that in the presence of such a racial higgledy-piggledy, the Serbian Government would have bowed to the principle of complete toleration and absolute equality of rights for all the peoples of these two districts. Indeed, at Belgrade I was told an anecdote by a prominent Serb, which, while it gave me an interesting piece of incidental information about Roumanian policy, was actually intended to quiet my doubts respecting Serbian methods; for, when Take Jonescu, the great Roumanian statesman, was informed, during a visit to Belgrade, that the law placed all Jugo-Slav subjects on an equal footing, he exclaimed in astonishment: "Is that really the case? We would never dare in Roumania to give our minorities the same rights as our own people!" Neither do the Serbs in practice, as I found out with much greater ease than I had expected. But then Providence surely intended the Serb to be honest, and he has never quite outstripped this initial disadvantage.

The Agrarian Reform. Since the Bánát and the Bácska constitute one of the greatest granaries of Central Europe, agricultural questions bulk largest on the horizon of the population, and the Agrarian Reform is one of the chief topics

of conversation. It ought to be said first that here, as in the other countries with which I have dealt, the larger landowners are mostly Hungarian or German. Some few are indeed Slav, but, as they fought during the war in the Austro-Hungarian army, the Serbian authorities do not pay particular regard to their interests to-day. The stage is therefore set for a really strong and sweeping "reform." The system that has been adopted up to the present is one of compulsory lease, and is applied to 99% of every larger property; it owes its existence to a decree, or, rather to a series of decrees, though a bill for the final expropriation of the land thus taken has been for some time under discussion in a committee of the Parliament and will probably be passed before very long.

Shaped in this fashion, the reform is executed with an even greater partiality than that shown in Roumania. Though most Slav proprietors are, as we have seen, fair game, it is probable that a loophole would be offered to any who were so fortunate as to be approved of by the authorities. This seems clear from an order, issued by the Agrarian Reform Ministry, that a proprietor's nationality* must be filled in on the prescribed

"Nationality" does not here refer to his National status, but to his "blood." Everyone in the Bánát and Bácska is now a Jugo-Slav subject.

form of particulars, in addition to his name and the extent of his estate. *The land so taken is given only to Slav peasants.* The decrees have not made any positive distinction between Slav and non-Slav; yet, in practice, during all these years no Germans, Hungarians, or Roumanians have received any land. As a matter of fact, there is in the Agrarian Bill, now in course of preparation, a clause definitely stating that only those Jugo-Slav subjects who are of Serb, Crota or Slovene nationality* are to have the right to get land. Even if they cancel this clause before the bill becomes law, and extend the right to non-Slavs, there will be no land left to distribute among them. The Agrarian Committee have left in the Bánát, for example, only eight to ten estates of 500 yokes and thirty to forty estates of 100–200 yokes—it would be neither feasible nor worth while to divide these up any further, and the rest has already been allotted, first, to local Slav peasants (up to a total of eight yokes each), and then what is over to Slav colonists, who are brought in from Serbia, Macedonia, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and even America!

The method of procedure of the Agrarian Committees was frequently quite extraordinary, for they would often come and take the land

* See footnote on previous page.

with a standing crop on it, choosing always by this means the soil that was richest. They would give indeed promises to pay compensation for that year's labour and seed, but these were never fulfilled.

The free rent to-day of a yoke in the Bánát varies according to the quality of the land from 300 to 2,000 dinars* a year; but the rent fixed by the Government as due to the proprietor under the compulsory lease system is from 15 *to* 50 *dinars a year!* The injustice goes further, however; for the same decree that fixes the rent compels the proprietor to pay all taxes on this land,† in spite of the fact that he no longer enjoys the use of it. These taxes are very high, and usually vary themselves from 15 to 50 dinars a year, so that the proprietor in most cases pays out the whole, and even more than the whole, of his rent in taxes. The crowning injury has yet to be mentioned; for, though the proprietor is compelled to pay these taxes punctually, he has now, in the fourth year of the "compulsory lease reform," only received about 10% of the rent due to him. The price to be paid to the proprietor, when his land is finally expropriated by Act of Parliament, had not yet been decided

* £1 sterling is equal to-day to about 265 dinars.
† Except the rate to the irrigation bodies.

on at the time I was out there ; but it was almost certain that the capital represented by this rent of 15 to 50 dinars would be the basis of compensation (instead of the true sale-value to-day of 6,000 to 40,000 dinars a yoke !). This will of course be paid not in cash but in State bonds.

The colonisation scheme is perhaps one of the most remarkable features of the Reform. In particular, the authorities forgot to make any proper arrangements for housing the peasants they had brought in, the consequence of which has in many places been acts of sheer lawless violence on the part of the settlers. I visited one such colony in the Bánát. The land given to these men had belonged once to a moderately big proprietor ; they found no houses to go to, when they came in, so (with the connivance of local officials) they took the law in their own hands, and drove the farm-labourers, who had formerly worked that land, out of their cottages, families and all. The farm-labourers, mostly Hungarians and Germans, were still employed on farm-work in the neighbourhood and were thus simply stranded with no roof over their heads. They and their employer tried every means to get back possession of the houses, and even procured an order for their restitution at the nearest court of law ; but, in Jugo-Slavia, there

The decapitated Francis Joseph statue on the University building at Cluj (Kolozsvár).

is many a slip 'twixt the judgments of courts and their execution, and in spite of this decision the local officials refused to evict the intruding colonists, who accordingly remain in possession to this day. Meanwhile, the farm-labourers had found a wretched shelter for themselves and their wives and children in a dirty and draught-ridden cattleshed. I found them installed in there in a kind of noisome darkness with their belongings piled round the beds—no privacy, no comfort, unpleasant smells and far too much air. Their circumstances have been just tolerable during the summer, but now that their first winter in these new quarters is approaching, they are beginning to lose all hope. It will certainly be surprising if all of them survive the hardship of it.

I spoke with some of the colonists and found that they had come from all parts of Jugo-Slavia. One of them who had been to America and spoke English, told us that the Serbian Government had actually induced some of them to come back from the United States, promising them land and paying their passage home. Most of these were now discontented with their lot, for they had left good jobs and found life on the land a very different thing from what they had anticipated. My informant, for instance, was a

factory worker, who had been accustomed to earning several dollars a day in the States, and he now found it hard to get a living at all. Even those who are real country-folk are having a hard time of it, for the kind of farming to which they are used is the rearing of a few sheep in their native mountains, and the coaxing of a scanty crop from the barren soil. Here they are, dumped down on the famous "black-earth" soil, richest in all Europe, and unable, owing to their complete ignorance of agriculture to get a decent living from it. One wonders whether the Government feels any sense of responsibility for these men whom they have brought in, equipped with neither knowledge nor capital. It is true that many of the colonists are lazy and do not try to get the best results from their allotments. A local farm-overseer told me that they would often lie about all day in front of their houses smoking and playing cards until an hour or so before sunset, when they sauntered off to do a little work in the fields. A great number of them have now grown tired of their new environment, and, letting out their land to people of the neighbourhood, have gone back to their old occupations.

The effect of these "reforms" on the great agricultural industry of the Bánát and Bácska has been little short of calamitous. I have

already stated that the Slav peasants and colonists who received expropriated land were not furnished with the capital for working it. But, further, except in a very few instances, they did not even get the machinery, plough-cattle, and other agricultural necessities, which had been used on that land before. At the outset of the reforms, the ministry of agriculture apparently overlooked the fact that the peasants would require additional implements and stock to cope with the extra task imposed. The big proprietors on the other hand had lost the land, and, having no further use for the farm-equipment, they sold it. Later (in the spring of 1920) came a decree from the ministry that all farm-equipment must be registered with a view to its distribution among the peasants; but, such little as was actually distributed and received by the peasants they sold at once! The results are alternative. Either the peasant gives up all idea of cultivating the whole of his land with only the equipment of his original holding, in which case the additional amount he has received remains unworked and unproductive; or else he attempts to work all his land with this inadequate equipment, with the consequence that the whole is badly cultivated, and the produce often less than that of his original holding used to be. Usually, he chooses the first

alternative. There is the illuminating example of one big estate, over 28,000 yokes of which were divided among peasants and colonists; in the year 1921, 10,000 yokes lay uncultivated.

Another case is that of an estate of about 2,000 yokes, which used to yield a hundred waggons of corn every year. The proprietor was "combed out" under the reform and left with 300 yokes, on which he manages now to raise fifteen waggons of corn yearly. The other 1,700 yokes were given to peasants and colonists, who only extract from it an annual produce of about ten to twelve waggons. Thus the proprietor, with only one-seventh of his former estate, succeeds in growing nearly half as much again as those who hold the remaining six-sevenths! The serious feature of it is the 75% reduction in the produce of the whole 2,000 yokes. This sharp decline in corn-production has led to a startling change in the position hitherto filled by these districts; for, according to one report I had, they have not only ceased the supply of corn to other countries, but are now even compelled to import a certain amount to feed their own towns. There are indeed a number of members in the Serbian Parliament, who are appalled by the recent statistics, and realise that the Agrarian Reform—at any rate as actually administered—was a gigantic piece

of folly. But the mischief is already done. It would now be virtually impossible to take away the land, by any political measure, from those who have been given it, and to create anew the large estates. Such a redistribution could only come about gradually and by the natural self-assertion of those economic laws which have lately been set at nought.

The economic bathos has brought social depression in its train. A certain amount of land-hunger existed before in the Bánát and Bácska, and there were peasants who possessed either no land at all, or an allotment inadequate to support them. These however were able to supplement what they produced at home by working on the estates of the big proprietors. The demand for labour used to be so great in the summer months, that large numbers of workmen migrated there from outside for the season. To-day, all that is changed. The passing of the large estate has thrown out of work even the majority of the resident hired labourers; they have nowhere else to go, and struggle now for existence on the minute patch of land that belongs to them—unless they are so lucky as to be Slavs. Those who still have managed to keep their employment are getting very much lower wages; for, estimating the value of the wages paid by their relation

to the price of corn, they were 100% to 120% higher in the old days.

It is thus clear that the Jugo-Slav Agrarian Reform cannot be regarded as a social measure, for any real social measure would neither discriminate between peasant and peasant, as this does, nor bring distress to almost every class of the population. The only logical explanation is that it is a political measure, designed to bolster up and accentuate the Slav element in the Bánát and Bácska, at the expense of the other nationalities, German, Roumanian and Hungarian ; to create a dominant nationality, and therefore *an argument from nationality*, such as could not be employed before ; and by this means to prepare a case in advance in the event of any future international reconsideration of the question of frontiers ; for such reconsideration would otherwise be guided by the only reliable sign-posts for those particular districts—economic commonsense, and just and efficient administration.

Other Questions. The Serbian policy towards the minorities lacks the Roumanian *finesse*, and scarcely bothers about veiling its naked directness. The root-and-branch measures applied to the schools are, in particular, distinctly crude and throw a clear light on the Government's intentions.

In the first place, all private and Church schools

are abolished, the State taking charge. This eliminates any little obstacles that might arise from separate control, and leaves the field clear for a prosecution of the campaign.

The Germans and Hungarians can be taught in their own language in the State schools, while they are in the four lowest classes—in other words, up to the age of nine. From then onwards, their education becomes extremely insecure—unless indeed they submit to the real wishes of the High Ones and enter the *Serbian* secondary schools at once and without further fuss. For German and Hungarian secondary classes are only allowed to exist if 30, and in some cases 20, scholars are found to attend each; should the numbers in any class fall below the minimum allowed that class is promptly dissolved. I went to see the Director of a Serbian lycée in the Bácska, and found that the Hungarian parallel secondary classes in his school had just been done away with on these grounds, though the town is one of the largest in the province and has a considerable Hungarian population. He produced elaborate statistics in order to convince me of the justice of this step, and I gathered from them that the position was somewhat as follows. Suppose that there are seven parallel secondary classes for Hungarians in a State School, and that four of these must

contain a minimum of 30 scholars and three a minimum of 20 those classes may actually produce a total of 160 scholars; yet, because this figure is short of the authorised minimum of 180, those 160 cannot be educated there, for the classes they would be in must be abolished! "Very well," their parents may then say, "our children are not allowed to go to school here, because apparently they are not in sufficient numbers. We will send them to "X" (a neighbouring town) to be educated; they've still got some Hungarian classes going there." This, however, is strictly forbidden. "One school, one area" is the watch-word of the authorities, for the very simple reason that the same business of manipulating the class-numbers is going on there, and the educational big-wigs at "X" have no intention of letting their little game be spoilt by a fresh influx of Hungarians, which would save the doomed classes from destruction. The methods adopted thus to reduce the size of the classes below the minimum are quite effective. To begin with, there are very rarely both German and Hungarian parallel secondary classes in the same town. The natural course for a German to take, since it is impossible for him to go to a German class in some other town, would be to attend the local Hungarian class, and *vice versa*; this however

is forbidden. Jews, similarly, may not enter a Hungarian or German secondary class, in spite of the fact that their mother-tongue is in every instance one of these two. Again, children with Slav names (or names which the authorities choose to consider Slav) may not enter Hungarian or German classes, even though they are not Slav in any other respect. In the same way, a Hungarian with a German name (of which there are many) may not enter a Hungarian class : he must attend the German ones, or failing that the Serb ones. But this manipulation has been carried to even further extremes, for purely Hungarian children with indisputably Hungarian names have been rejected on account of their appearance. " You have fair hair," say the authorities to a prospective pupil, " and can therefore be no true Magyar, but a German in reality. You must go into the Serb class ! "

Of course, the law of minimums and the " one school, one area " ruling are applied with flagrant inconsistency ; for, though German children from " X " may not go to the German secondary classes at " Y," they are nevertheless at perfect liberty to attend the Serb ones there ! Similarly Serbian children are even being brought from Serbia and from Macedonia to the Serb schools of the Bánát, in order to swell the number of

Slavs in the classes. There is yet another method of reducing the numbers; for, at the end of the year, 40 to 50% of those in the Hungarian and German classes are "ploughed," and dismissed, whereas the proportion of children in the Serb classes who suffer this fate is only 5 to 6%.

The net result of all this is that there are now hardly any German or Hungarian secondary classes left in either Bánát or Bácska. In those that remain, the pupils run a very great risk of finding their particular classes closed down at the end of a year and their education abruptly cut short.

There are no Hungarian or German Universities in Jugo-Slavia and unless a young man can afford to go to Vienna or Germany he must enter a Serbian one, which will be of small use to him, since he probably knows little of the language. The obvious course of going just over the frontier to the University of Szeged, or to Budapest, is strictly forbidden, or, if anyone is by chance allowed to go there, he may not return to his home again. I got an instructive insight into the facts of this, through the indiscretion of that same Serbian lycée Director whom I have already mentioned. I must say, my friend and I did rather try his patience, for we sat down in his parlour and bombarded him with awkward

questions, until the temperature rose most markedly. We came at length to this University question. "Tell us," we asked, "why is it that you do not allow Hungarians to go from here to the Universities in Hungary?" "You are mistaken, gentlemen," he rumbled ominously, "there is no law at all to prevent a scholar from completing his education in Hungary." "Ah, no *law*, perhaps," we suggested, "but, in practice, is it not the case that passports are withheld?" The Director was a large man with an excessive blood-pressure, and when his wrath exploded we feared for his health. "If you want to know about passports," he roared, "go round the corner to the police-station! *They* will tell you about passports; but *I* tell you *this*—if I were the police, *not one* Hungarian young man would be allowed a passport to visit a Hungarian University!" ("Shocking!" we murmured, "that is mixing up politics with education—most deplorable!"). "You two are ignorant," he continued, bellowing, "you are young! your information is not up-to-date! How do you not *know* that every Hungarian youth who went to a University in Hungary would come back a bad and seditious Jugo-Slav subject?" We took a hurried departure. . . . . Our information about this ban had been largely derived from a

concrete case which we took care to investigate before calling on the worthy Director: some four or five Hungarian youths, after unsuccessfully making every effort to get their passports so endorsed that they might go to the University at Budapest, had finally dispensed with this formality, and were in consequence hauled out of the train on the frontier and put in gaol. I would not for a moment question the justice of punishing them for ignoring the passport regulations. They knew well enough how great was the risk of detection. What is interesting is that they should ever have been driven to take it.

The School grievances are not confined to the Germans and Hungarians. I spoke to a Roumanian village priest, and he told me that the Roumanian language was now forbidden in their schools, and that as many Serbian teachers as possible have been drafted in lately to replace those of his own nationality. There were not, however, enough of them to go round, so in some places teaching still went on in Roumanian, in spite of the ban. He told me of one entirely Roumanian village, where a *Russian* had been installed as teacher, who knew no other language but his own and a very few sentences of Serbian; so that the children there always sat idle in class! This priest also complained of infringements of

Church autonomy. The Roumanian Churches there had always been extremely independent in spirit, and their rights were therefore carefully respected in the past. It used, for instance, to be always customary for them to pray for the King of Roumania, but no prayer could be said for their own sovereign, the King of Hungary, unless the Bishop at Caransebes ordered it. The Hungarian authorities never interfered with this practice, but the new Serbian ones have taken up a very different attitude. At the village of Petroselo, a gendarme held a revolver to the priest's head and forced him to pray for the Serbian King! In my friend's own parish, the congregation was obliged to sing the Serbian National Anthem in Serbian. Again, those Roumanian children who wished to train for the priesthood were now unable to be taught in the Roumanian language at home, yet were not allowed to go to Roumania itself. Altogether, he shook his head very much over the change in conditions and said that he had been quite contented with things as they used to be.

The economic measures against the minorities were rather clever. At the beginning of the new *régime*, most of the business enterprises were placed under State control, with Government officials at their heads to manage them and collect

the profits for the benefit of the State. In 1920, it became possible to get them decontrolled once again, but only under the following conditions: (1) that no compensation could be claimed from the State for any injury suffered by the business during the period of control; (2) that a 25% levy on the capital of the business had first to be paid to the State; (3) *that the administration and direction of the firm should be so reorganised as to show a proportion of* 50% *Slav while* 50% *of the shares were also to be in Slav hands.* This last clause applies also to the formation of new companies. The officials in charge of the control and of the subsequent transfer were accused of hampering the non-Slav enterprises in every possible way for the benefit of the Slav ones, which were thus able to steal a march on their former competitors.

There are no Hungarian or German members of Parliament, for the very simple reason that there are no Hungarian or German electors! It is true that by law every Jugo-Slav subject over twenty-one years of age is entitled to a vote, but actually the authorities in the communes never put down Hungarians or Germans on the register. In spite of Serbian explanations to the contrary, it will therefore be exactly the same at the next election as it has been hitherto.

In other matters, the state of affairs is very much as it is in Transylvania—clubs, "culture-institutes," and similar establishments seized without compensation and given over to Serbian purposes; no language but Serbian allowed in the law courts; arbitrary arrest; flagrant corruption among the officials; destruction of monuments; police brutalities; all the other dreary items which contribute to the misery of a people. There is nothing in the nature of revenge for the past in the present oppression.* In the old days, some of the highest State functionaries had risen from the ranks of the Serbian minority; there were Serbian schools subsidised by the State; the minority Churches enjoyed complete toleration and respect; and Serbian voters and deputies existed in reality as well as on paper.

It was always said of our own "land fit for heroes" that very soon only heroes would be brave enough to put up with it; but it is certain that its Balkan cousin, the new dwelling fit for Serbs, should be condemned as unhealthy for any other people to inhabit.

* To take the town of Novisad (Ujvidek) alone as an example, one of its citizens rose to be one of the greatest judges in Hungary; the burgomaster there, even during the war, was a pure Serb; and there used always to be a Serbian theatre there, though there is no Hungarian or German one now.

Chapter IV.

JUGO-SLAVIA: CROATIA.

ALL my way round Central Europe, I had been looking forward intensely to coming in contact with the Croatian question. Everyone I met who heard that I was going eventually to Zagreb seemed extremely curious about the character and aims of Radić, the Croatian leader, and about the condition of the country. When we got to Belgrade, we heard bitter criticisms levelled at Croatia, on account of her separatist movement and descriptions of Radić as a kind of inspired lunatic. We began to feel that we were on the threshold of Central Europe's unknown quantity, and we very soon found that we were right.

Since, with all due respect, a good many people in England do not even know what or where Croatia is, and a yet greater number are ignorant of her history since 1918, a short sketch of events in the recent past is indispensable.

When the tidal wave of defeat and despair

rushed, an all-destroying flood, over the Central Europe of 1918, breaking old ties and sweeping away ancient and crumbling foundations, that violent and phenomenal centrifugal force followed close in its wake, sudden as a tropical gale and completing the havoc of the waters. The flagship had gone to the bottom, and the remnants of the proud imperial fleet were scattered far and wide over the ocean ; small peoples which had not stood alone for centuries were driven to shift for themselves, to choose each its own course ; " sauve qui peut " was the last united cry of the races of the monarchy. Croatia was no exception to the rule. In some ways indeed she was better equipped than many another for independent action on the international seas, for, under the Hungarian Crown, she had enjoyed a parliament and a constitution of her own, local troops, and a considerable and highly-cultured educated class ; she had had control over justice, education, the interior, and to some extent finance ; while with very small trouble the office of Ban could be taken from the hands of a viceroy and given to prince, president or regent, as the people might please. Accordingly, on the 29th October, 1918, the Croatian National Assembly proclaimed its independence and elected a Ban of its own to carry on provisionally the functions of head of the State.

For a few brief moments of political life, it basked in its transitory independence. The Bánát and Bácska, Bosnia, Herzegovina, and the Slovenes had formed themselves into a sort of shadowy confederation with Zagreb—not a concrete political reality, but a mutual understanding, rather, for the purpose of protection and combined bargaining in the international market. The declaration of independence had been followed by one which expressed the willingness of Croatia to enter into a union of some kind with Serbia and Montenegro, on the understanding that the organisation of the South Slav States of the former Monarchy should not be tampered with until a constituent assembly had met to draw up the definitive constitution. This was the gist of the agreement at Geneva concluded on the 12th November, 1918, between the Kingdom of Serbia on the one hand, and this South Slav group on the other. Ministers, appointed by each party to the contract were to regulate in joint council their mutual relations until the meeting of the Constituent Assembly, and finally it was understood, at any rate by the Croats, that the voting of this assembly was to be by national groups and not on the basis of a simple majority of the whole.

Events however, moved more rapidly than the negotiators had anticipated. Whether we attribute

blame to the sinister designs of Serbia or to the relentless force of circumstances, it must be agreed that it was a time when nice delimitations of legal relations were peculiarly liable to be upset. It soon became clear that Serbia had no intention of humbling herself by paying regard either to the spirit or the letter of the contracts. The grip of Belgrade tightened speedily on her new provinces, and the crisis arrived for the embryo organism, when it was announced that all deputies must take an oath of allegiance to the King and the Kingdom, before they could sit in the Constituent Assembly. The shock brought about a miscarriage. The members of the Croat Peasant Party and of the old Rechtspartei (Conservative), fifty-two deputies in all, thereupon publicly proclaimed their refusal to sit in an assembly which was " constituent " only in name, and not really a sovereign body. They were joined soon after by eleven more deputies (of the Croat Union Party), who decided to follow the example of the others, as soon as they learnt that the voting on the constitution was not to be by national groups but on the simple majority system. They maintained that it was too much to expect a people to abide by the decision of a majority which might perhaps contain not a single representative of its own nationality. This body of sixty-

three deputies constituted themselves into what was henceforth known as the "Croat bloc." Vast majority though they are of the total number of Croat deputies, their supporters in the country have since increased so rapidly, that an election to-day would probably eliminate even those few deputies who stand aloof. They claim, with perfect truth, to be the only true representatives of the Croatian people; for those Croats to whom Radić appears as too much of a demagogue, follow the lead of Kosutić, who heads the Conservative wing of the bloc, while those whose aversion from Serbia is more moderate stand in the ranks of the Croat Union, captained by Drinković and Lorković. Whatever people at Belgrade may say to the contrary, the differences of opinion inside the bloc are for the present quite negligible. I paid several visits to the Croatian Club (headquarters of the bloc) and found the various elements co-operating with the utmost harmony and friendliness. They are united for the time being in their common aim to overthrow Serbian centralism, and have not yet begun to dispute among themselves as to the measure of independence which shall succeed it. So great is the intensity of feeling behind the movement, and so striking the union of all classes to support it, that it has far more weight in it than the Irish

Nationalist movement of pre-war days, and resembles rather the position in Belgium from the Congress of Vienna till the revolutionary break-away from Holland in 1830. There is in fact much in common between the two cases, though the Croats have a cultural superiority over the Serbs such as the people of Belgium never had over the Dutch.

The position of the bloc then is not only clear, but perfectly logical. They stand for Croatia. Croatia committed herself in 1918 to entering a union of the Serbian and other South Slav peoples, on certain conditions. The Serbs have violated those conditions and the contract is therefore at an end. Thus, from that day to this, the sovereignty of Croatia still resides in the majority of the elected representatives of the people, who are entitled to make what dispositions they please.

The hub of the movement is of course Radić. I shall always remember the morning we first met him, when we went up to his small new villa on the outskirts of the town. One's first impression on seeing him is of a man of intense vitality and activity of mind. In appearance he is rather of the French bourgeois type—fat, short, dark, with a yellowish complexion and vaguely light, short-sighted eyes, which yet dart

quickly enough from one person to another, and are full of acuteness and intelligence, especially when taken in combination with their setting of fat and the wrinkled, rather humorous, crows' feet at the side. For the rest, dumpy fat hands, an insignificant nose, beard and whiskers somewhat unkempt, and scanty, tousled hair, inadequate for the concealment of his pale pate.

But though his appearance may not be impressive, his speech is something quite unique. His is no ponderous eloquence, but rather a torrent of sparkling ideas, epigrams, and metaphors, soothing, inspiring, persuasive or exciting according to his will. So great in fact, is this natural gift of his, that it is often a stumbling-block to himself, for, by leading him into self-contradiction, it furnishes his enemies with their favourite charge against him of not knowing his own mind for ten minutes at a time. He is thus extremely liable to intoxication by the very "exuberance of his own verbosity" and the richness and fertility of his imagination. He never can resist giving expression to an idea (however much it may conflict with his previous remarks), if only it flashes into his mind with an illumination sufficiently brilliant and striking to tempt him.

As to his policy and views, the outward semblance—what he would have one see of him—

is the only part that one can lay a finger on with any measure of precision or accuracy. In the first place, he wishes to stand almost entirely on the basis of the peasantry. He knows that, with universal suffrage, anyone who captures the peasantry captures the helm of Croatia, and he therefore represents himself as of peasant stock, the son of a peasant (which indeed he is). He takes up the attitude of father to them, loving them deeply, watching over them with a jealous and tender anxiety; so he affects no show of wealth or importance, is hail-fellow-well-met with all of them, and moves constantly over the countryside, looking into their affairs, keeping touch with them, and letting them see him. He is not only a social champion however, but also and above all a national one. He lays great stress upon the prime indignity inflicted on the Croats, namely, that a nation accustomed to the style of kingdom, with a parliament and a constitutional existence of its own should survive to see that parliament and constitution suppressed and a new one foisted on it from outside; to experience the humiliation and discomfort of being ruled from the capital of Serbia (a country with about one-sixth of Croatia's length of history) and of being flooded with the corruption of the Belgrade bureaucracy. So he stands now for a Croatian

Republic, since a republic is the antithesis of the monarchy against which he is struggling—much the same reason as there was for the republican form taken by the Irish movement.

He did not appear to me to harbour any very deep republican convictions as such, confessing to us for example what we had already heard about him, that he had once written a poem in honour of the Emperor Francis Joseph, though he explained it away as being a poem in praise of the idea of confederation under the Imperial Crown. Nor in the social sphere does he hold any whole-hogging views (such as one would expect from a peasant leader) on matters like the land question, his opinions being on the contrary extremely moderate. He favours the continued existence of the large estate wherever it is being worked well, but the expropriation on the other hand of the wasteful and inefficient landowner and also of Church and State. He explained that during the last fifty years there had been a steady development in Croatia towards a natural solution of the Agrarian problem, *i.e.*, by ordinary free purchase. In religious matters, he likes to be looked upon as a most pious Catholic, which is important in view of the fact that the Serbs are orthodox and that the war of the two Churches in Croatia has been constant and most violent

ever since 1918. Apart from his commitments to the campaign against Serbian Centralism and in favour of the adoption of a Republican form of Government, he has left himself with a fairly clean sheet to work on in the future. He has indulged his fancy in the past in such an orgy of contradictory statements, that for any scheme he launched into he could produce some previous argument of his own. Even without going back on any of the more steadfast views which he has expressed, he can enter a confederation of the Southern Slav peoples, either including or excluding Serbia ; he can hold up Croatia to the world as a completely independent nation, or he can throw her into a union with one or more of the Danubian States. He could even extricate himself from the Republican commitment without very much difficulty, for, as he put it to me, " I consider the England of to-day to be a Republic in all but name ! "

As for the inner Radić, he must remain, if he exists, more or less of a riddle for the present. Personally, I should be inclined to consider him as possessing rather the Lloyd-Georgian type of temperament, in that he is honest in his beliefs by a process of self-persuasion, however quickly these may change and give place to others ; and being one of Nature's opportunists (who are

always entirely sincere men) he might employ doubtful weapons at times, not from preference but only because he considered their use was justified by the particular end for which they were being employed. This may explain away part of the Radić mystery, but not all. Through the whole of his nebulous philosophising and vague planning there runs a taut and tangible thread of definite policy, a thread which is never interrupted. He has been threatened and imprisoned for the spinning of it, but he has steadily continued at his task with the defiance of his absorption, until matters have now gone too far and the authorities dare not imprison him again. No one knows whither the thread is leading or whether the spinner has yet made up his mind as to the destination. The intellectuals follow the thread, because so far it has taken them the way they want to go; the peasants, because they have hearkened to the voice of the charmer and surrendered their sense of direction to his. He is a kind of Pied Piper *redivivus*, but it appears to me most probable that he no more knows where he is going than do the children who trip along so gaily behind. The metaphorical thread is, of course, his anti-Serbian campaign.

So long as the mist holds he may go on spinning a path through it merrily and the others will

follow without question ; but the time must come when the keen winds of circumstance will sweep the landscape clear, and he will be called upon to point out some definite spot for a destination. That will be the test of Mr. Radić ! It is no use as yet for him to raise the cry for one or another brand of confederation or for independence : to do so would be to lay his cards on the table, and besides he knows fairly well that the future of Croatia must of necessity be largely decided by factors outside his own control. So for the time being he sets up the standard of Republicanism as a rallying point for the peasantry, and refuses to define any further. Whatever line he may eventually take, there is one course he must (and does) essentially pursue, if he is to involve the peasantry in purely political and constitutional issues : he must not only represent them (quite truly) as dissatisfied with a bad administration, but also give them the credit for a real native inspiration in political matters, which they simply do not possess. He said to me, " This movement is not imposed on the people from above, but it is rather one in which the leaders are spontaneously fed with energy and enthusiasm by the rank and file, for it is they who make this and believe in this ! " Radić took us far out into the country one day among

the peasantry, and we lunched with them and spoke with several who understood German or had emigrated once to America and knew a little English. They were an excellent type, but did not strike us as being particularly interested in forms of Government as such. Very possibly, they do not even know what the word " republic " means, and indeed an Englishman who has travelled much in the country and lived there long, told me that they were by nature eminently monarchist in sentiment and loved the idea of a king, though they do not respect or reverence the King of Serbia, because they know that he comes of peasant stock himself ! Several educated Croats corroborated this view. Altogether, the peasants' opinions to my mind were mere echoes of speeches to which they had listened and (in fewer cases !) of articles which they had read. The Republic is for them the millenium—or perhaps only another name for a return to pre-war conditions : the abolition of flogging and bastinadoing (which was introduced by the Serbs and is now frequent) ; better treatment in the army for the men who are conscripted ; a lower cost of living ; reduced taxation ; the eradication of corruption, and a generally improved administration. These are the things they care deeply about, and it is the present defects in such every-

day concerns, which makes them so discontented. Add to this the eloquence of Radić and their genuine affection for him, and their share in the movement is entirely accounted for. So wherever Radić passed they waved delightedly and shouted " Long live the Republic ! " and, when we stopped for lunch they collected in a crowd with a large Croatian banner and presented him with bouquets and in other ways displayed their enthusiasm for the chief. They presented us with bouquets too and gave cheers for Great Britain, presumably because we happened to be with him ! The peasants I spoke with were eager for Revolution, but deplored the lack of arms. " Let the Serbs only touch Radić, however," they declared, " and, arms or no arms, we will rise." The peasantry are taking the same attitude throughout the length and breadth of the country, for Radić has been an assiduous worker and is always on the move among them. So much for the Peasant party wing of the bloc (49 in number).

The Croat Union wing has adopted a line considerably more moderate : one of the leaders told us that he wanted to preserve the Jugo-Slav ideal, and was only fighting against Belgrade centralism. It is, however, fairly clear that events have moved far since these deputies were elected, and that their supporters are now considerably influenced by Radić's campaign.

Finally, there is the Conservative party of the bloc, numbering only three deputies. This party used to be both large and powerful, but most of its supporters were driven by violent persecution under the new *régime* to seek a refuge in the ranks of the peasant party. Such as it is now, it stands for the educated class, and, though it professes republican principles, I do not for a moment believe that these count for anything intrinsically in the eyes of its members and their followers. They impressed me as extremely anti-Serb, their whole outlook being westward and to the lands of the former Empire, their great desire to renew the old connections under an altered form. I spoke to several non-political persons of the educated class, and found that their views were practically identical. For, though the Croats speak much the same language and are of the same original stock as the Serbs, these are the sole connecting links, and the higher one searches in the social scale the more fragile do they become. The upper classes and the bourgeoisie regard the Serbs as little less than barbarians, with a culture belonging to the East, if it can be said to belong anywhere or to exist. They are intensely irritated by the administrative incompetence and corruption which stifle trade and depress them economically. They themselves are

in every way members of the Central and West-European orbit ; their culture is high and of long standing, and they can look back over centuries of history during which the Serbs were to their forefathers as the savages beyond the pale. Two peoples, with entirely divergent pasts, traditions and habits, suddenly thrown together, with the ruder and more primitive civilization uppermost—what else could one expect from the educated but intense disgust and aversion ? This is the standpoint of the entire educated class with the exception of a very few " intellectuals " who get about as much support from the public as British pacifists enjoyed during the war—" generals without an army," in fact, as the others described them to us derisively. Some of these are honest idealists actuated by an irrepressible instinct for lofty theorising and paper politics. The rest are opportunists who have committed themselves too deeply to draw back and hope to win favour from the Serbs ; the whole only some three per cent. of the educated. Lastly, moreover, a lingering affection for the Habsburg dynasty still lives on in many hearts, though people dare not give much expression to it to-day.

It is worthy of note that Radić also has taken up the cultural argument, and has been impressing the peasants with their superiority over the Serbs ;

no doubt their level is higher, but as between peasant and peasant the distinction cannot be so marked as in the ranks above.

I have spoken of the Croats, and it should be borne in mind that these are not only the predominant race in Croatia-Slavonia (which was under the Hungarian Crown), but also in Dalmatia, Bosnia, and Herzegovina (which used to be under the Austrian Crown). Of these, Dalmatia and Herzegovina are almost entirely Croatian ; while in Bosnia, about 60%, mostly living in the west, are Croats (Catholic and Mahommedan), the remainder, who inhabit the eastern portion, being Serb. The Croat movement thus affects a wide area, and besides this it finds temporary allies outside its boundaries, in Montenegro and Macedonia,* where the population is bitterly discontented and the oppression is accompanied by savage atrocities, and in the Bánát and Bácska

* We met delegates from Macedonia, and their descriptions of Serbian rule over them might be summed up in the words : arson, pillage and massacre. It is curious to find that one section of the Macedonians now claims that there is such a definite and distinct thing as a Macedonian Nation. These people boast (with a glorious disregard for history) that they are the descendants and successors of Alexander the Great ! Other Macedonians dispute this ; but the feeling may possibly be quite genuine, even if there is no logical cause for its existence. A prominent Macedonian is reported to have said : " Les Turcs comme maîtres étaient mauvais ; les Bulgars étaient pires ; mais les Serbes—ces sont des diables ! "

The empty pedestal of the Liberty monument at Kosice (Kassa) in Czecho-Slovakia.

among the minorities. In other words, from what I could see, all the non-Serbian citizens of Jugo-Slavia are united in their fierce antagonism to the Serbs, with the single exception of the Slovenes, who appear to be a more docile people and to cherish still the new connection, while opposing the excessive centralization.

In short, while all the materials seem prepared for a first-class explosion, the Serbs pursue their course lightheartedly, ignoring the roots of disease in the body politic and applying severe treatment to the symptoms. It is difficult to see how they can remain blind to the realities of the situation for much longer ; and it is almost too late now for compromise, even if the Serbs were the kind of people to go in for compromise ! Probably, they will only awake, as Metternich did in 1848, when they find the mob hammering upon the massive doors of their contemptuous self-sufficiency.

PART II.

Chapter I.

CONCLUSIONS ON THE MINORITY QUESTION.

IN my introduction to this book, I promised to reserve for this second part my denunciations of the present treatment of minorities, limiting the scope of the first to a mere detailed account of what I saw and heard. It is probably as well for the reader's patience that I have broken this promise in more than one place, but this chapter has still, nevertheless, a brief *rôle* to play. We have run through a catalogue of oppressions which, though I fear it may at times have become a tedious repetition of unpleasantnesses, gives a fairly faithful picture of conditions in the States of the Little Entente.

It will be observed that there is considerable similarity in the methods pursued in the countries of which I have spoken, varying only according to the characteristics of each particular dominant people. There is the same use of the weapon

of agrarian reform for a political and national end instead of for a social one, though the social side is employed as a cloak for the other; there is the same curtailment and starvation of the minorities' religious, educational and cultural institutions; the same infringement of public rights; while incompetent administrations, which affect both minority and majority are allowed to press far more heavily on the former: all these means directed towards the same purpose—the absorption of the minorities into the majorities, culturally, religiously, even linguistically, until each of these states emerges as solid a national block as England, France, or any other of the West European countries. The trouble is that, while the originals were produced by a purely natural process, the copies are being modelled with an artificiality that seeks to defy even the obstacle of Time. This infatuated imitation is what Arnold Toynbee calls "the shadow of the West" on these Eastern states. The result in territories with so mixed a population is, at the best, injustice and oppression, and, at the worst, massacre. It would be bad enough and calculated to produce consequences sufficiently serious, if these new citizens of Roumania and Serbia were people of the Balkans themselves, with the same Byzantine and Turkish traditions;

but they belong, on the contrary, to a Western system, and their attention for generations has been carefully attracted away from all contact with their Balkan neighbours by the magnets of Western religion, culture and methods of administration. The contrast then is for them all the more bitter and astounding, and they feel rather like people in the drawing-room would at receiving orders from below stairs. If Greek and Turk fight on in bloody feud about the oppression of each other's minorities, how much more surely and with what a ferocity of outraged sentiment will Western powers in time avenge the ill-treatment of their kinsmen under a Balkan yoke ?

It may as well be said at once that the governments must bear the lion's share of the blame. The cloak of high-sounding laws and paper promises may be as capacious as it will, but the sword of a deliberate policy glints out from underneath. It is impossible for *everything* unpleasant that happens in a State to be accounted for by elaborate explanations which leave no reflection on the government's conduct ; in fact the very multitude of the excuses tends to fasten suspicion on those that make them, for they cannot escape blame by placing it on everyone but themselves—minorities, hostile states, lower officials, " angry crowds," and the rest. That is

rather like the man who came down at the end of his three years at Oxford, and said he had not chosen to make any friends because the people there were such idiots.

On the other hand, a little investigation—as I hope I have shown in this book—will convince anyone that the governments have been actively as well as passively guilty—that theirs is not only a failure to control subordinates, but also a definite legislative bias.

Now, in the next chapter, I offer very tentatively two alternative suggestions for the peace of Europe. Whether, on the one hand, future events take some course similar to either of those I have outlined, or, on the other, every effort is made by the two Ententes to preserve the settlement laid down by the treaties, two things are inevitable—that there always must exist minorities over all that part of Europe, and that they must be accorded very different treatment from the present, if constant war is to be avoided. Arnold Toynbee says in his new book* that "the treatment of minorities everywhere—including unnecessarily and unjustly subjected minorities—will improve in proportion to the growth of mutual confidence between the state of which they are subjects and the other state

* "The Western Question in Turkey and Greece."

of which they would prefer to be citizens." I would prefer to reverse the order, and put it that a better, an ostentatiously better, treatment of minorities would do much towards cooling that intensity of hate which is the predominant sentiment to-day from the Alps to the Black Sea. Toynbee may be right also, in which case the progress to peace is a sort of revolving wheel on which one can take one's seat anywhere (provided that one does take one's seat); but I am inclined to think that as long as the roots of the present ill-feeling obtrude themselves on the attention of the various parties, so long will the barriers between them be exceedingly difficult of removal. It is, for instance, not only useless but also in rather bad taste to ask Hungary to abandon her "foolish standoffishness" (as her critics term it), to let bygones be bygones, and to shake hands with a Roumania which continues to trample underfoot the Transylvanian Magyars.

I am tempted to lay down here some principles for rule over minorities, which, though they may seem obvious, cannot apparently be too frequently emphasized and repeated. The foundations of the structure would be equal rights for every subject of Ruritania, whether or not he happens to be Ruritanian-born, and *as much individual liberty as possible.* The reason for this

last is that wherever any Ruritanian government steps into the daily life of the citizen, it is bound—however honest its intentions—to be regarded with suspicion by those who have learned from experience to be suspicious. The chances of such friction ought therefore to be reduced to a minimum. Accordingly, a start might be made by removing all government control, where the object of control could be handled equally well by private citizens or corporations. The land reform policy should be entirely revised and looked at purely from a social and economic standpoint. Preferably, all ambitious legislative schemes of reform should be dropped, the process being left to work itself out naturally, though with active government encouragement. It could well be laid down that, wherever and whenever the peasants require land, they may apply for it under a system of compulsory sale, paying a price for it by instalments slightly but not unjustly below the normal current rate, while the government could guarantee enforcement of this provision for compensation; the proprietor ought to be secured a *substantial* minimum of land beyond which he may not be expropriated, though that minimum could be a lower one in the case of absentee proprietors and corporate bodies. In any case, no distinction should be

drawn between those who are Ruritanian by blood and those who are only so by status. Proprietors who opted, under clauses of the Treaty, for a national status other than the Ruritanian might be placed on the same footing as absentee proprietors (*i.e.*, allowed an inexpropriable minimum rather lower than that of the resident proprietor),* but permission to do this ought first to be obtained from the other signatories to the Treaty, or from the League of Nations. Any such revision as this would of course be extremely difficult wherever the definitive Agrarian Bills have become law, and also even where they have not, if substantial promises have already been made. In such a case, the Government of Ruritania could at least raise the scale of compensation to a just level, and also remove any obstacle which might hinder the proprietor from repurchasing, if the peasant wishes at any time to sell again; he might in fact be given first option to buy it back at the price which was originally paid him in compensation.

Colonisation should as far as possible be abolished. It is uneconomic and nearly always introduced from political motives.

* As opposed to the present method of complete expropriation which infringes the Treaty clauses protecting those who wish to opt.

Religion should be absolutely free from all government interference. If religious bodies have had their land taken away, they should be endowed with sufficient sums to cover all their needs.

Education in Church schools should be freed as far as is practicable from all governmental restrictions. Parents should be as much at liberty to send their children to a private school (no matter if it is of a different denomination from their own) as to a State school. A fair number of private schools should be allowed for each minority, and adequately subventioned by the State; no restriction should be placed on the founding of new schools in addition to this indispensable quota; the State need not subvention these extra ones, unless it can be shown that they are necessitated by a corresponding increase of population.

The minorities must be allowed to enjoy voting and all other rights of the ordinary Ruritanian citizen. The Government of Ruritania must bear it in mind that, having undertaken to rule over Western peoples, it has placed itself under an obligation to raise its own standards to their level, and to improve the methods of administration which it has imported from "Old (*i.e.*, pre-war) Ruritania." Therefore, the bureaucracy must be purged of the ignorant, the inefficient, and the dishonest. By the same token, the

Government of Ruritania would be taking a wiser and more statesmanlike outlook, if it began to regard the minorities as innocent or loyal, in each individual case, until they have been proved guilty or seditious ; the reverse has been its attitude hitherto.

To make a clear show of this change of front, institutions like the Ruritanian secret police, the wide arbitrary powers of officials, and the system of decrees that have the force of law should be utterly and for ever abolished. Ruritania should show that she is proud of all her citizens, anxious for their co-operation, eager to trust them to the full, and, by so doing, to make up for the past.

Once these measures are carried through, economic barriers will crumble away with the ease of their rotten artificiality, and the millenium will begin !

Chapter II.

TWO SUGGESTIONS FOR PEACE.

IN the previous chapter, I sketched the alluring landscape of the Ought-to-be—the only conditions on which the settlement of the Peace Treaty can be either justified or tolerated. I should now like to say that I do not for one moment suppose such a picture would ever be granted hanging-space, while the gallery remains under the control of the present directors. I do not suggest that the Balkan is as incapable of change as the Ethiopian or the leopard; but his evolution will be a slow and a painful one—particularly painful for those who are compelled to watch it at close quarters. In other words, the Ruritanian may become a respectable member of international society and fit to rule over minorities within a minimum of fifty years or so, but meanwhile the unfortunates upon whom he will practise to attain perfection will either be completely Ruritanianised or else driven out of the country; it is far too much to demand of the minorities. Some statesmen, again, believe

that the minority and that part of the majority which has lived with it for centuries and become Westernised will capture the Government from the Old Ruritanians and raise them to their own level. I do not think that there is any chance of this; the minority alone could never do it, and the numbers of the other section are too exiguous and their politics too visionary to bring such a consummation within the scope of practical possibilities. Besides, those who touch pitch cannot help becoming defiled; and unfortunately the history of successive civilizations shows that the minority of superior culture never does succeed in so raising the majority which is inferior but rules: it always sinks down to join the other. Such a set-back to civilization would be a calamity that could not, *and will not,* be allowed. For the supporters of those Treaties may plead for patience until they are hoarse, from their pleasant surroundings in Paris or London; but meanwhile the temperature down there is rising rapidly to boiling-point: within one-tenth of the span of the evolutionary fifty years, the lid will fly off the kettle, and Central Europe (if I may mix my metaphors) will settle the matter out of court. It would be all very deplorable, no doubt, and a great commotion would be raised by those gentlemen who think that peace is preferable to war,

even if it is a peace that crystallises injustice. But it would have *happened*. New frontiers would appear, and the foundations be laid of a permanent feud, which would crop out every now and then in fresh fighting, the intervals being consecrated to a studious suppression of minorities. That is what will come if the Powers of Europe do not hearken in good time to the rattling of the kettle, draw the obvious deductions, and consider in advance their plans for the new order of things. I have now eliminated from the horizon the possibility of any rapid evolution for the better under the present settlement, and I have also shown how unsatisfactory (from the point of view of progress and durable peace) would be a settlement which resulted from new fighting *and was uncontrolled by the Powers;* a settlement, that is, which would result in any one of the antagonists dominating the situation. Hungary has many just grievances against the Treaty, but if she were to re-conquer by force of arms Transylvania, Slovakia, and Croatia, and subject them to the centralised government of the Holy Crown, I do not think that any real solution of the problem would have been attained. I would not say, however, that any other alternatives could be achieved without fighting. Glad as one would naturally be if a just settlement could be built

up by diplomacy or arbitration, I do not believe that those who now hold the spoils of war would ever consent freely to part with any portion of them for the sake of an abstract principle. This was shown fairly clearly a short time ago, when Jugo-Slavia refused to cede back to Hungary a few villages on the frontier containing a purely Magyar population, even though she was urged to do so at Geneva and through diplomatic channels. I fear that we must count upon and anticipate as philosophically as may be an upheaval which is practically inevitable. What *can* be done is to isolate the struggle, and to work for the acceptance of an alternative solution, which, by presenting itself as a goal, may avert the chaos of uncertainty or the disaster of any settlement by which one State would dominate the rest. In this chapter, I will endeavour to make two tentative suggestions, which might provide a serviceable side-track for the runaway engine. The one is based on the principle of nationality, more justly interpreted than at the Peace Conference ; the other, while not ignoring the claims of nationality, attaches greater weight to the questions of peace and economic stability.

Let us first examine the materials with which we can build. First, in the centre, we have Hungary, which is now practically a solid Magyar

block of about eight millions; with its capital, Budapest, radiating railway lines in every direction through Central and South-Eastern Europe; shorn by the Treaty of its raw materials, its factories idle, but with an agricultural industry that is still capable of flourishing if only it can be released from the senseless extortions of the Reparations Commission; highly cultured and Western in civilization (though the race is of Eastern origin); efficient in administration and in every kind of pioneer work for the opening up of undeveloped areas; strong in character, virile and proud. Next comes Austria, tired and clever, agriculturally inferior to Hungary, but with highly developed industries, which are now somewhat handicapped by the necessity of buying coal and raw materials outside; Vienna, even more of a junction of the ways than Budapest, but presenting Austria with a hungry mouth, which, with her much diminished territory, she finds it difficult if not impossible to fill. The Czech part of the Czecho-Slovak Republic, with a broad and discontented German strip down the north-western and southern sides; very industrial and with much mineral wealth, but unable to find customers in the surrounding states, owing to the high value of the Czech crown. The Slovak part of the Republic, with the southern strip predominantly

Magyar and the northern part inhabited by a Slovak majority; mainly agricultural, though with a certain number of mines which used to feed the Budapest factories, and also with some forest areas which formerly supplied wood to the plains; the Slovaks themselves, a small and peaceful people, without a considerable educated class. As to Transylvania, there is a belt of Hungarian plain, agricultural in character, down the west side which is not technically Transylvania at all, and the western half of this is inhabited by a population of which the majority is Hungarian; Transylvania itself, a country of low hills and broad valleys rising up to the Carpathians on all sides but the west; rich in agricultural produce, minerals which used to go to the manufacturing towns of Hungary, timber which went to the great plain on the west, and salt for the Magyar cattle-farms; with a population, including the western strip, roughly five-ninths Roumanian, three-ninths Hungarian, and one-ninth German, if we exclude all but the three principal peoples. The Roumanian educated class is small and far outnumbered by that of the Magyars and Germans, while the culture of all three peoples* is distinctively Western,

* Of the Roumanians, this only applies to the Transylvanians, of course, and not to those of the Regat. See page 30.

belonging to the Austrian-German and Hungarian type. Then comes the Bánát (overlapping both Roumania and Jugo-Slavia), and the Bácska in Jugo-Slavia (with Southern Baránya), with a wonderfully rich soil for agriculture and a jig-saw puzzle of a population. I have not the figures for the whole Bánát, as a separate entity, but, in the Serbian half and in the Bácska and Southern Baránya, the proportion of the principal nationalities to the whole is roughly six-twentieths Magyar, five-twentieths Serb, and four-twentieths German, leaving five-twentieths for the other peoples; the educated class mostly German and Magyar, and altogether of Western culture.

Finally, we have Croatia-Slavonia, Dalmatia, Herzegovina and western Bosnia predominantly Croat and Catholic, a sound race, with a high culture belonging to the West but with less political experience than her northern neighbours and a certain disinclination to stand alone; the country districts principally devoted to cattle-breeding, agriculture, fruit-growing, and timber-raising, though also with some little-developed mineral resources, including oil. Of the Slovenes I know nothing, except that they number between seven and eight hundred thousand!

Here we have the salient characteristics of the

various units, and can thus proceed to consider the alternatives for their future.

A.—The Solution by Nationality.

Working on the principle of nationality first and foremost, I would begin by considering those States which have obvious blocks of minority population situated right on the frontier. If these are next-door to the country to which they wish and ought to belong, I would move that frontier to the other side of them.

In such a category, we must begin with Austria : the Burgenland, which used to be in Western Hungary, was given to Austria under the Peace Treaty, presumably on the ground that the majority of the inhabitants are German. The transfer was a mistake for four reasons : first, because the Burgenland had never in the past been among the domains of the Austrian Crown ; secondly, because the inhabitants not only speak a German *patois* which is almost unintelligible to the Austrians, but also are not Austrian Germans at all, having originally come from Swabia as colonists ; thirdly, whatever may have been their attitude at the time that the transfer was made, I certainly found when I visited this district in April (1922) that they were quite pathetically anxious to be given back to Hungary ; and lastly,

the surrender of territory to one of her allies and partners in the war has embittered Hungary's feelings towards Austria at a period when it is vital that the two should be drawing closer to each other. If necessary let there be a plebiscite* here. I have no doubts about the result.

In Czecho-Slovakia, there are two districts to be so disposed of—the Germans of Bohemia-Moravia, and the Hungarians of Slovakia. The former were, of course, previously Germans of the Austrian and not of the German Empire; but, for obvious reasons, it would be impossible to hand them over to Austria (save for the small fringe in the south of Moravia), and they would therefore have to join the Germans of the Reich.

The new frontiers would run roughly as I have drawn them on the map. The Hungarian belt stretches along the whole length of Slovakia, and is at its broadest from Bratislava (Pressburg or Pozsony) eastwards to where the present frontier cuts the Danube. To be logical, it ought to include Kosice (Kassa) and the southern fringe for a good way beyond that; but this would entail cutting the railway communication between the Czecho-Slovak Republic on the one side and

* The only part in which a plebiscite was permitted was the Sopron area, and the result here was in Hungary's favour.

Ruthenia (at present also in the Republic) and Roumania on the other, so for the sake of convenience we might leave that strip untouched and terminate the territory to be ceded just short of Kosice.

We next come to the parts belonging to Roumania that were taken from Hungary. Now, in spite of the large Hungarian population in Transylvania proper, the bulk of this is on the eastern side, and there is a large Roumanian wedge in between shutting it off very completely from Hungary. This prohibits any such measures as we applied in Slovakia, and we must therefore leave Transylvania alone for the present. That strip of Hungarian plain outside the frontiers of Transylvania (but which was given with it to Roumania) is quite a different matter. The eastern side of this is predominantly Roumanian, it is true; but the western, known as the Körösvölgy, contains a Hungarian majority and is in every way bound up with the rest of the great Hungarian lowlands. This area varies in breadth from ten to thirty kilometres, extends from 25 kilometres north of Satu Mare (Szatmár-Nêméti) to 30 kilometres west of Arad, and includes both these two important towns and also Oradea Mare (Nagy Várad). The main argument against letting Hungary have this territory was

that it would deprive Roumania of the only railway line linking up the south of Transylvania with the north. This argument does not hold water—in the first place, because there is no such connected railway communication down this strip at present ; and secondly, because if there were, it would not be the only north-south line in Transylvania. I think this is fairly well proved in my Appendix on the question.*

So much for the simple minor adjustments of frontier. There may be other and lesser ones that I have not mentioned, but these would necessitate comparatively insignificant changes which could easily be left to the decision of frontier commissions.

Next we come to those territories where the population is too mixed for a settlement on the basis of nationality, and where economic and other exigencies can therefore take the foremost place. Such are the Bánát (Roumanian and Serbian, and including the district of Krasso-Szorény alongside), the Bácska and Southern Baránya. Since it is useless to attempt the subdivision of these territories, they should be handed over to that state which is capable of giving them the best administration and the maximum of prosperity—in other words, to Hungary, of which,

* See Appendix, p. 152.

incidentally, they also clearly form a part. This transfer is not an unfair one, even on the basis of nationality. It must be borne in mind that Germans and Hungarians can be counted together for all practical purposes. The Germans had a few minor grievances in the old days, but these have long ago been sunk in oblivion. Every German whom I met, feels himself now to be entirely in the same boat as the Magyar and wishes to be again under Hungarian rule; the two peoples are united by their common participation in Western culture, and by their intense aversion from the conditions of to-day. The Germans would be by no means a small and helpless minority in Hungary, for, right throughout the country, German colonies are to be found which have been settled there for a longer or a shorter period.* Therefore, when it is seen that about half the population of these territories is Magyar-German, the transfer seems by no means unfair.

So much for those lands where the problem of nationality is so easy or so difficult of solution, that it can be settled almost offhand. We are now left with Austria, a very much larger Hungary, a Bohemia-Moravia that is reduced in size, a

* Sixty years ago, the inhabitants of the Buda half of the capital (Ofen, as it is called in German) were almost entirely German and could hardly speak any Magyar.

Slovakia which has lost its southern districts, Ruthenia, Transylvania, and the Croatian group.

There is nothing that can be done with Austria in this scheme. She might of course be handed over bodily to Germany; but I am not at all sure that this is so easy or so fitting a destiny for her as it sounds. To begin with, there is some opposition in Germany itself; there is a great deal in Italy, and among all the Slav peoples; and even in Austria there is a larger element against it than commonly makes its voice heard. At best, it has been no more than a *pis-aller* idea for Austria; her true place is in the southern half of Europe, not in the northern. As part of the German Empire she would be brought into touch with all sorts of problems that do not interest her and quarrels with which she has no sympathy. From the European point of view, it would be eminently undesirable, for it would introduce Germany into Southern Europe and enable her to monopolise the commercial penetration of the Balkans, as she never was able to do before. Austria had better stand alone and independent in this scheme, and wait for a general lowering of tariff walls among her neighbours, and the brighter economic outlook that would result from this. Hungary, similarly, has (in this scheme!) got back much of her lost population,

and can face the world as an independent state. Hungary and Austria might draw together by degrees, beginning with an economic partnership ; but it would be hard to get any tie much closer, if only these two were on the *tapis* for consideration. They would be so liable to quarrel, if thrown together without the moderating influence of other parties. The Czechs and the Slovaks would have to continue their rather fretted partnership, since we are drawing the map on national lines ; but the present centralisation must disappear and be replaced by a looser tie. We can consider the Ruthenians at the same time. From the standpoint of nationality, these should be united to the Ukraine, but the fact that there is a wedge of Polish territory between the two puts this out of the question. The Ruthenians are a very backward people, and well treated would accommodate themselves to any rule. Though they are Slavs, they were quite contented under the Hungarian Crown,* but after the war they somehow found themselves suddenly pitched into the Czecho-Slovak Republic, with the promise of an autonomy which has never materialised. As Slovakia has lost (under our scheme) so much of her present territory, it seems that the simplest

* The objection to Ruthenia returning to Hungary would be the cutting of the railway-line to Roumania.

course is for Slovak and Ruthene to join in one parliament, while Bohemia and Moravia share another, representatives of both meeting at Prague for the affairs of the Republic as a whole. There appears to be no other practicable way out of the present *impasse*, if the idea of the Republic is to be retained. The Slovaks would never consent to a re-imposition of the unitary constitution and the Czech domination, after taking part in such an upheaval as I have foreshadowed.

Next we come to Transylvania. Now, in this country—which was for so long an independent principality—contemporary opinion is sharply divided over the question of autonomy. The Roumanians are quarrelling bitterly, it is true, with the Government of Bucharest,* but they have at present no intention at all of agitating for Transylvanian Home Rule. Their ambition is rather to oust from power the Old Roumanian political parties, and to rule the whole of Roumania themselves. The Hungarians, on the contrary, will never be satisfied with anything less than Home Rule for Transylvania, if the way back to Hungary is to be closed to them. The Germans take a view of their own—they are bound always

* See the furiously bitter protest published in "Patria" (12th October, 1922) by the Transylvanian National Party, on the occasion of the coronation at Alba Julia, from which they abstained.

to be in a minority, to whichever state they may belong; they had not much sentimental affection for the old monarchy, but they cherish still less for the new; their chief preoccupation is with the security of their lives, liberty, property and pursuits; they are therefore disgusted with the present *régime*, under which none of these is properly safeguarded; they would welcome a return to the Hungarian *dominium*, or they would equally welcome Transylvanian autonomy. If Central Europe goes into the melting-pot again, Roumania will have at the least to pay a very heavy price, should she wish to keep Transylvania out of it. The minimum will be the grant of Home Rule. We must not forget that, in the event of an upheaval, the Hungarians of the province, supported by the Germans, will probably make their power and influence very forcibly felt there, even if they do not become the dominant element; for the time, be it remembered, will be a revolutionary one. Transylvania will thus be linked to Old Roumania by the Crown, customs, foreign affairs, and the like, the rest being relegated to the Parliament at Cluj (Kolozsvár). Transylvanian autonomy ought to produce a very happy condition of affairs in the province; she has a tradition of independence; there is no faction so powerful that it could oppress the

others; whilst all would be united by their common cultural interests.

The Croatian group must have its parliament at Zagreb, and stand on an absolutely equal footing with Serbia, enjoying an even greater measure of independence than in pre-war days. Whether the Slovenes would wish to assume a like status, with a parliament at Laibach, or alternatively to join the Croats, I do not know; that could be decided by plebiscite.

There lies Scheme "A," but there are two other essentials before it could become in any way feasible. The first is a general lowering all round of these ridiculous tariff-walls; the second is the provision of adequate safeguards for the minorities (there will still be minorities). Professor Gilbert Murray has already pointed the way for this last in the motion he brought before the League of Nations, last September, a motion which unfortunately was rejected owing to the opposition of the Little Entente States. The only method by which the great Western powers can fulfil their obligations in this matter, is for them to press for the appointment of a Commission, responsible to the League, which will stay *on the spot* to watch over minority interests. If anything were to occur which necessitated a protest from Geneva, and the offending state

still proved recalcitrant, it would not only be the moral duty of the Great Powers, but also to their actual advantage to support that protest with all the weight of their influence. Their failure to realise this in the past is one of the calamities which have brought matters to the bitterness of the present crisis.

B.—The Other Solution.

There are however several very good reasons why the scheme outlined above would be an unsatisfactory one. If we look at the settlement established by the peacemongers at Paris, we can see that they did have some justification for the course they took. For instance, why did they not *then* follow out their own nationality principle logically in the case of Czecho-Slovakia ? Why did they not *then* give the German part of the population to Germany, and leave the Hungarian fringe under Hungary ? Partly of course they were faced by a *fait accompli* which had already been endorsed with the approval of Entente statesmen. But there were other reasons. If there was to be a Czecho-Slovak Republic at all, it must be sufficiently strong to stand by itself ; it must have strategic frontiers, a manageable shape, and access to the Danube. Even as it is, it is a creation ungainly enough, but my scheme would have

produced a veritable abortion. It is only necessary to look at the map to see how exaggerated would be all those features which are at present exceedingly disadvantageous. The fact is that the men at Paris could not *then* achieve anything but a compromise. Czecho-Slovakia is perhaps an extreme instance, and much might be said for many of the other dispositions in Scheme "A" But there are arguments to meet these also. My main contention is that we in Western Europe have been confronted with so many triumphs of the nationality principle among ourselves that we have got into the habit of applying it as an acid test of any settlement, no matter with what part of the world we may be dealing. I have already spoken of Arnold Toynbee's expression, "The Shadow of the West." He maintains in his book that the "homophone" idea of a nation—one state, one language—is only applicable to the West of Europe, where it has been acquired by a natural process of evolution; and he deplores the fact that the Near and the Middle East have grasped it and applied it to their own organisms, for which it is quite unsuited as well as foreign. But the idea is every whit as incompatible with conditions in Central Europe as it is with those of Near and Middle East, and since its first introduction it has brought

nothing but woe to all concerned, acting and re-acting until the final crash. The lesson of 1848 led to the imposition of the Dual System in the old Empire, and the fact that German and Magyar had learned the idea and were applying it gave a fresh stimulus to the movement among the lesser peoples. The rot, once started, spread with a lightning rapidity through the whole edifice, and brought about the downfall of what might (under happier auspices) have developed into one of the finest Temples of Peace ever erected by the handiwork of man. It is no use regretting helplessly what might have been, but it *is* profitable to enquire into the causes of failure and to consider how something like the old ideal may yet be reached. After all, ideals broadly interpreted can never be relegated to the scrapheap; nor is it reaction to seek after the attainable by new methods, when other ones have proved unsuccessful—it is only the perseverance of commonsense and clear judgment. If only we can get it firmly fixed in our minds that that seed which gives us bounteous harvests of happiness in Western Europe produces a crop of armed men further East as surely as ever did teeth of the dragon, we shall be on the high road to a solution of the problems at issue. The calamity of the mistaken view is the more tragic in some parts

of Central Europe where a superficial deceptiveness makes us believe that the seed is falling on good ground. We found Croats speaking the language of the Serbs and springing from a common stock ; we jumped to the conclusion that they ought to be united. It is not only we who jumped but also the Croats themselves, in the stress of stormy and unbalancing times. The unsatisfactory consequences of many a war-marriage of private individuals are by now well known to us ; but the post-war *mésalliances* of these peoples of Western culture and traditions were something quite unique : they rushed to the altar with their rude husbands, in a moment of intense emotion, and ever since they have been occupying their much-harassed leisure with tardy repentances. For all their present orgy of national hatred, these peoples are beginning to realise that for them nationality is a consideration of minor importance ; culture, history, tradition, economic interests, efficiency of administration—the whole cause and essence of their standard of civilization—take first place. They are turning inwards now to look for companions of the same level. Radić summed the matter up for me rather strikingly in a comment on the Pan-Slav idea : " Pan-Slavism," he said, " is a literary and spiritual ideal ; it ought not to be pursued as a political

reality." And the same applies to the other will-o'-the-wisps of Nationalism. Thus, inequality of culture is to-day a far more potent source of dissension than any difference of race. Culture is a word which we in England employ with some distaste, because our own is sufficiently firmly rooted to stand in no peril; but those peoples who have gotten them "rude husbands" treasure their culture as their last vestige of respectability—and they know now that even it is slowly being taken from them. All this is what is meant by the "Balkanisation of Central Europe."

Now, if we postulate first a great upheaval, surely the happiest and wisest of results would be the re-union of all these non-Balkan peoples in a great and civilised community. It is not a new idea, for it was mooted some time ago by Benes, the famous Czech statesman, and the "Danubian Confederation," meaning one thing or another, has frequently been on people's tongues since then. But in all the various suggestions, there has been too much of a tendency to include in the proposed group those very units, which are most likely to be productive of strife. Radić is most emphatic in his condemnation of it: "Il faut isoler la Serbie," he said to me; and the same applies to Old Roumania. These two states do not belong to the central orbit,

A substitute for the railway. How the Author was obliged to cross the frontier between Timisoara and Vrsac.

and would as inevitably hamper the progress of the others as a carthorse harnessed beside a quick-trotting pony. Let them turn to their own sphere of activity, the Balkans. There is plenty of room for another Confederation down there, for there are particular interests common to all the Balkan States ; and there is the joint watch on the Turk for them to maintain.

If these arguments be accepted, then we can turn to the reconstruction of the centre. The process would probably be an interrupted one ; we cannot expect our upheaval to be so far-reaching and so purposeful as to establish the new order in the twinkling of an eye. This would not, however, be of great importance, for if only three or four units can combine to form a nucleus, the others will join it sooner or later. The ultimate composition would be somewhat as follows :— Austria,* Hungary* (with the Burgenland, Bánát,

* It will probably have been observed that I have made no mention of that part of Austria which has been given over unjustifiably to Italy. Similarly, I have not spoken of Fiume. These omissions were intentional. I certainly consider that Austria has a right to get back much of that territory, which is now Italian by status, but German in population ; Fiume again, is vitally required by the Croats as a trade outlet. But it would be better if these questions were laid aside for the time being. As it is, it will be difficult for Italy to refrain from interference in future Central European events ; and no doubt in time a friendly adjustment satisfactory to both sides might be negotiated, by peaceful methods.

Bácska and Körösvölgy, but *not* necessarily with Southern Slovakia), Bohemia-Moravia, Slovakia-Ruthenia, Transylvania, and the Croatian group (including the Slovenes) ; each of these a separate unit, with a Parliament of its own to settle all affairs but those few vital ones which affect the confederation as a whole—foreign policy, trade, customs, communications, *and minorities*. These would be regulated by delegates from each state meeting in common council at Vienna or Budapest, or even in a kind of imperial Parliament. Matters need not be hurried, but there is indeed no insuperable obstacle to the forging of yet another link, which has shown itself to be of paramount value in keeping our own British Empire together. As a symbol of unity, I believe the institution of the Crown would meet with almost as little opposition in Central European circles, as it does in Canada, Australia, or any other of our great self-governing dominions ; for I saw nothing in any country I visited, to convince me that the idea of monarchy would be inacceptable, provided only that its interpretation were strictly constitutional ; even the Czechs, I understand, are king-lovers at the core ! Probably however such a development would have to come later, after the new organisation had won for itself confidence and regard. The fact that customs and communi-

cations are subjects within the province of the Central Council or Parliament will rid these states of one of the greatest curses from which they have been suffering since the war, for it will involve the destruction of all those petty frontier barriers. Most important also, the lot of the minorities in each state will be improved beyond all measure by the agency of those states whose kinship to the oppressed will lead them to undertake their protection at the Central Council. Foreign policy is the most difficult subject of all, but its course might even be smoothed in practice by the heterogeneous character of the confederation. It would be anything but aggressive ; and the consent to a war could only be obtained from all the various units, if one or more of them were directly threatened or attacked.

I have based these suggestions largely on the hypothesis of an outbreak of war and revolution in those parts in the near future, and I can see many of my readers raising their eyebrows in some scepticism at such a prophecy. We in this country have heard and read little of late which might lead us to take this view. Most people are under the impression that conditions have been rapidly improving during the last year or so. The Press praises the diplomacy of Dr. Benes and the efficiency of his nation, but is silent about

internal strife in the Republic ; it makes occasional mention of some slight friction between the Transylvanian Roumanians and Bucharest, but glosses it over as smoothly as may be ; it ignores the existence of the Croats, and only speaks of Jugo-Slavia in connection with matters of foreign policy or dissensions between the King and his elder brother. Hungary, in the eyes of Fleet Street, is a turbulent comic opera country, receiving occasional raids by her royal family; while Austria is a poor desolate creature, whose pain may be alleviated only by occasional injections of financial morphia, and on no account by any operation. It is a magnificent distortion of reality ; but then the feelings of our late allies of the Balkans must be treated with delicacy, at all costs ! My only answer to all this is the evidence of my own senses during a tour of several months, in which I tapped every profitable source of information ; and I can but refer the sceptical reader back to Part I of this book, or, better still, recommend to him a visit of thorough personal investigation in those parts. It is nothing short of a tragedy that British public opinion has been kept so completely in the dark about the situation.

The way in which this upheaval will be brought about is quite another matter and far more difficult to forecast. It is possible that some

overgoaded population may suddenly revolt, without care as to whether the moment be auspicious ; but it appears to me more probable that some outside event will precipitate the disturbances ; and I rather incline to the view that Croatia will be the first to move when such an event occurs. The Croats assured me with much emphasis that they would rebel and proclaim their independence if the Serbs went to war with any other country (even with the Turks), if the Serbs tried to mobilise them, or if Radić was interfered with in any way. Any one of these eventualities is quite within the bounds of likelihood, and the Croat insurrection would furnish Hungary with the opportunity of liberating from the Serbian yoke the Magyars and Germans of the Bánát and Bácska. The Czechs would at once join in the fray to attack Hungary, and both Slovaks and minorities in the Republic would rebel as soon as mobilisation orders were issued.* Roumania might come to the aid of her partners in the Little Entente, but it must be remembered that her troops would have to make a long march through the partially hostile territory of Transyl-

* It is little realised how near the Republic was to civil war, when the late King Charles entered Hungary in the autumn of 1921. Had the King's attempt not met with a speedy failure, and had the Czechs persisted in their intention to make war, a revolt would have been practically inevitable.

vania before ever they could join issue with the Magyars, and the chaos in her finances must also be taken into account ; it is thus quite possible that she would be more inclined to show the proverbial preference for discretion. Meanwhile, the explosions in Jugo-Slavia started by Croats and Magyars would rapidly spread and encircle the Serbs, for Bosnia, Herzegovina and Dalmatia would fall into line with Zagreb, in so far as the Croat majority are concerned ; while the populations of Montenegro and Serbian Macedonia, always ready for the traditional pastime, would particularly welcome so ideal an opportunity of avenging the outrageous atrocities inflicted upon them by their new masters. Such might be roughly the sequence of events—a conflagration not unlike the Revolution in Central Europe of 1848, in the extensiveness of the area it would cover. If Great Britain, France, Italy, and, above all, Germany can be induced to hold themselves aloof from the actual struggle, then we may rest content in the conviction that a happier future is dawning, that this ugly upheaval is an essential purgative, brief if unpleasant in the duration but speedily justifying itself by a healthier condition of the body politic. It might come about in any other fashion, but it is the virtual certainty of its imminence that is of

importance. Let the Western Powers only remember that, and so attune their minds to the prospect, that they will be able to exert their influence, when the time comes, in a spirit that does not overlook the causes. For it is their *influence* alone (and not their armed interference) that can limit the flow of blood. Their part is to point to the way of peace in the most favourable moment of the conflict, to gather up the broken straggling threads and to unite them under the privilege accorded to their *prestige* in a firm and practical proposal. What better one could they offer than "The United States of Central Europe"?

APPENDIX.

THE ROUMANIAN-HUNGARIAN FRONTIER QUESTION.

WHEN the question of the Roumanian-Hungarian frontier came up for consideration at Paris, it was pleaded by the Roumanians and conceded by the Powers that a long strip down the east side of the Great Plain must be given to Roumania as being essentially bound up with Transylvania—first, because it contained the only North-South railway line in the whole of the territory taken from Hungary by Roumania; and secondly because it was economically attached to Transylvania. Through the kindness of a friend, I have had access to detailed particulars about this question.

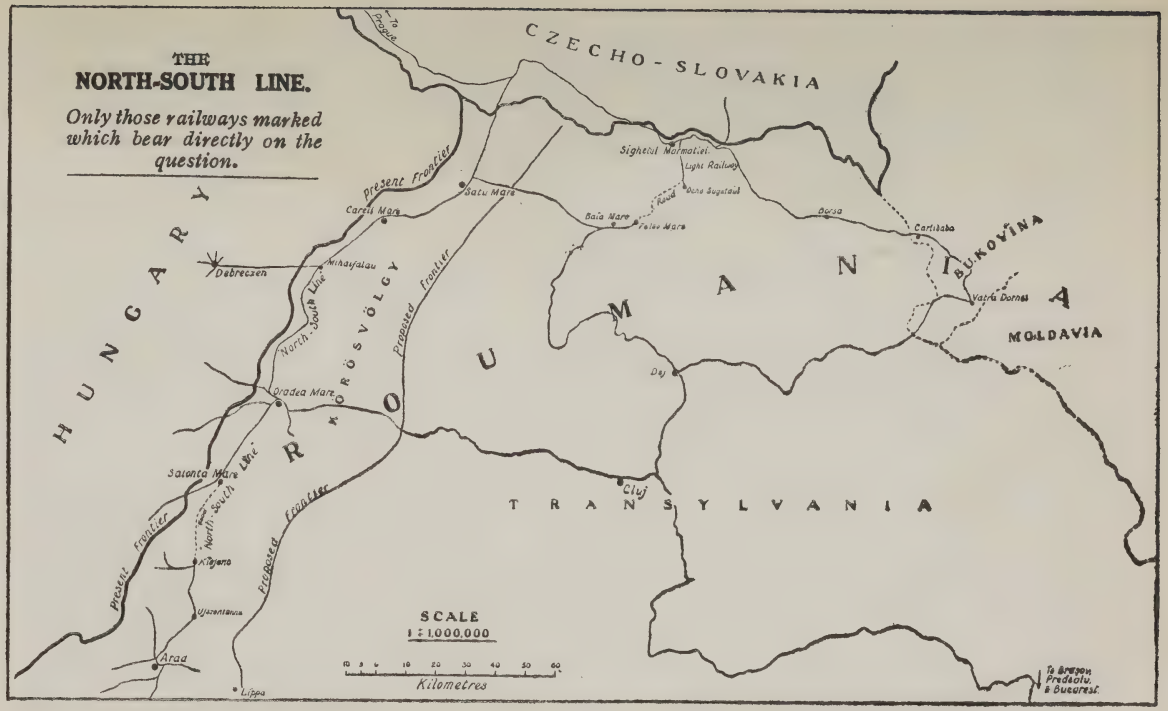
To deal very briefly with the ridiculous economic contention, this strip has never been anything but a part of the Great Plain. If Roumania considers this strip to be bound up with Transylvania, then she might urge almost as logically that the whole of the Hungarian plain should also be handed over to her. I believe that in

the first flush of her enthusiasm after the war she actually did harbour designs of this nature! At all events, it should be emphasized that there is no shadow of difference between this strip and the vast area to the west, of which it is a part; nor is there any boundary more natural than a double row of customs officials. Transylvania, on the other hand, is a very distinctive entity, and is perfectly capable of standing alone. She succeeded very well in dispensing with this strip of plain during the century and a half in which the Turk was occupying Hungary and she was an independent Hungarian principality. At present, indeed, this piece of disputed territory is going through bad times, *as a result* of being joined to Transylvania and cut off from the rest of the lowlands.

The other point is the North-South railway line, which is alleged by the Roumanians to run up the length of this strip and afford the only longitudinal communication for Transylvania. I should be very grateful for information regarding the whereabouts of this great artery. I can only find on the map a series of very diverse sections, some of which are main line, and the rest second or third-class line, not to mention the big gap in the middle!

We will, however, start at Arad and travel

slowly up the North-South line to Satu Mare. Difficulties beset us at the very beginning, for the first section is a second-class local line from Arad to Újszentanna (distance, 24 kilometres), so we shall have to discard any notion of travelling in an express—the line is not fit for it—and content ourselves with a slow local train. Újszentanna? Very good, let us descend and make a fresh cast. The only way we can get northward from Újszentanna is by another section of second-class local line, which will take us up to Kisjeno (distance, 23 kilometres)—slow train again, of course. We get out at Kisjeno, and ask a porter when there will be a train leaving for the north; his reply is that there is no train and no track! So we have to continue our journey along this "North-South line" by carriage or on foot for the next 35 kilometres to Salonta Mare. As we go, we see workmen busy constructing the line along which we had hoped to travel; but they are extremely slow about it. At Salonta Mare, we come upon one of the two isolated sections of first-class line in the whole length of our journey—the 38 kilometres main-line stretch to Oradea Mare. After passing along this section in an express, we are rather annoyed at having to turn out into a slow train again for the 66 kilometres from Oradea Mare to Mihaifalau;


THE
NORTH-SOUTH LINE.
Only those railways marked which bear directly on the question.
CZECHO-SLOVAKIA
To Prague
HUNGARY
ROUMANIA
TRANSYLVANIA
BUKOVINA
MOLDAVIA
Present Frontier
Proposed Frontier
North-South Line
Satu Mare
Carei Mare
Debreczen
Nagyvarad
Oradea Mare
Salonta Mare
Kigyos
Gyantsa
Arad
Lippa
Sighetul Marmatiei
Light Railway
Baia Mare
Felso Mare
Dorna
Cernauti
Vatra Dornei
Dej
Cluj
Kalotaszeg
Bihar
SCALE
1:1,000,000
Kilometres
To Brassov Predeolu & Bucarest

but we leave Mihaifalau in an express, for the final 68 kilometres to Satu Mare is along a main line.

After making this journey, we may hold what opinions we please as to the necessity for a continuous first-class main line for this whole distance ; but any illusions we may have fostered as to its present existence are for ever banished. Of the total distance of about 255 kilometres between Arad and Satu Mare, only some 106 have been traversed on a main line. The fact that the Roumanians may be endeavouring to remedy this defect is of no consequence whatever in the present discussion ; the substance of my contention still remains, that their plea for this strip on the pretext that it contained a North-South line was false. One cannot understand how the Powers were ever brought to listen to it.

Still, had it been the case that there was no North-South line anywhere in the newly-won territory, and that this was the only part in which it was really feasible to construct one, there would be some justification for Roumania's demand. It is not the case, however. There actually is a capital North-South line further east, in Transylvania, running from Bucharest (*viâ* Predealu, Brasov, Cluj, Dej and Baia Mare) to Satu Mare : 614 kilometres of this line are on

Transylvanian territory, and of these, 362 kilometres (between Predealu and Cluj) are first-class main line, while the remaining 252 are first-class line built for strategic purposes. With many tributary local lines joining it, it is amply sufficient for all Transylvanian purposes. The value of this line would appear to have been slurred over by the Roumanians and ignored by the peacemakers.

But if Satu Mare is to go to Hungary (as was proposed in the last chapter and on my map), direct communication between Czecho-Slovakia and Roumania will, it may be urged, be severed. There are grounds for that objection, but it is by no means an insuperable one. The Czecho-Slovak railways communicate with Sighetul Marmatiei, which is just inside the Roumanian frontier. From Sighetul Marmatiei to Felso Mare (which is linked up by railway with Baia Mare) is a distance of about 45 kilometres by main road, and roughly twenty kilometres of this stretch is already covered by a light railway, which runs from Marmatiei to Ocna Sugataul. It should not be in any way impracticable to construct a railway to join up these two towns, for, though the country is hilly, it is so almost everywhere in Transylvania, and there are several main-line sections in the province which have necessitated more difficult engineering feats.

Even without the necessity of constructing new lines, there is a route already in existence, which, though more circuitous, affords a means of direct communication between Czecho-Slovakia and Roumania. I refer to the line running from Sighetul Marmatiei to Borsa and round by Carlibaba and Vatra Dornei (in the Bukovina) to Dej, Cluj and Bucharest. Since the Bukovina now belongs to Roumania, the fact that the line crosses a corner of it does not put the suggestion out of court.

To conclude, one is tempted to suspect that the claim to that strip was not prompted by the exigencies of communication, but simply by the desire to obtain as much territory as possible to swell the bulk of the new Great Roumania. Therefore, the fact that there is a preponderant Hungarian majority in the area traversed by this mythical "North-South line" seems clearly to point to the need for a readjustment here in favour of Hungary. A more scientific investigation of the question at Paris would have saved a great deal of trouble by producing a similar conclusion, years ago.

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NOTE TO THE FOLDED MAP.

1. According to Solution I it will be seen that where the dotted line, ... has been drawn, land is given—

   (*a*) in the N.W. of Bohemia to Germany.
   (*b*) in the S. of Bohemia and Moravia to Austria.
   (*c*) in the E. of Austria (*i.e.* Burgenland) to Hungary.
   (*d*) in the S. of Slovakia to Hungary.
   (*e*) in the W. of Roumania and N.E. of Jugo-Slavia to Hungary.

2. Solution II. The Scheme for a Central European Confederation (*see* boundaries marked ||||||||) would comprise Austria, Hungary, Transylvania, Bohemia-Moravia, Slovakia-Ruthenia, and the Croat group. It will be seen that the alterations under Solution I have been retained in Solution II only as to clauses (*c*) and (*e*). Serbia has acquired a wedge of territory in the N.E. of Bosnia.

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Showing frontiers as at present, adjustments of frontier as in the "First Solution," p. 130, and reorganisation as in the "Second Solution," p. 140.

..... *Provincial Boundaries.*

——— *State Boundaries as at present.*

. . . . *Alterations of frontiers (Solution I).*

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